

# THE DISCOVERY OF ALBANIA

Travel Writing and Anthropology in  
the Nineteenth-Century Balkans

JOHANN GEORG VON HAHN

*Translated and introduced by Robert Elsie*



BLOOMSBURY



**Johann Georg von Hahn** (1811–69) was an Austrian diplomat, philologist and specialist in Albanian history, language and culture. **Robert Elsie** is a writer, translator, interpreter and specialist in Albanian studies.



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# INTRODUCTION

Johann Georg von Hahn (1811–69) is generally considered to be the founder of Albanian Studies as a discipline of study. It was he who first examined the little Balkan country and its people in a more comprehensive fashion, and it could indeed be said that it was Hahn who ‘discovered’ the Albanian nation for the scholarly world.

An interest in Albania and the Albanians arose in the late eighteenth and, in particular, in the first half of the nineteenth century. The German philosopher Gottfried Wilhelm Leibniz (1646–1716) inquired, in his letters, about the nature of the Albanian language, but it was the Swedish historian Johann Thunmann (1746–78) who first published a lengthy treatise on the Albanians, *Über die Geschichte und Sprache der Albaner und der Walachen* (*On the History and Language of the Albanians and Vlachs*), Leipzig 1774.

In the early nineteenth century, Greece’s struggle for independence from the Ottoman Empire and a fascination with the realm of Ali Pasha of Tepelena (1744–1822), i.e. the region of Epirus and southern Albania, drew the attention of many European scholars and writers. The much-dreaded Albanian potentate Ali Pasha, also known as the Lion of Janina, held court at the fortress of Janina (now Iōannina), which was seen at that time as the capital of Albania, and regional politics gave

him sudden prominence and contact with the outside world through diplomatic links with France and Britain. From 1806 to 1815, the historian François Pouqueville (1770–1838) served as French consul general to the court of Ali Pasha in Janina. He was the author of the three-volume *Voyage en Morée, à Constantinople, en Albanie et dans plusieurs autres parties de l'Empire ottoman pendant les années 1798, 1799, 1800 et 1801*, Paris 1805, published in English as *Travels through the Morea, Albania and Several Other Parts of the Ottoman Empire to Constantinople during the Years 1798, 1799, 1800 and 1801*, London 1806. This highly influential, though not always reliable work was widely translated and read at the time, and served to introduce the region to the West. It was the British topographer and diplomat William Martin Leake (1777–1860) who toured Epirus and southern Albania on several occasions from 1804 to 1807, and then published *Researches in Greece*, London 1814, which contained a 125-page outline of Albanian history and a c.2,100-word Greek–Albanian–English vocabulary; and a four-volume account of his journeys in *Travels in Northern Greece*, London 1835, that also helped to bring the Epirus region to the attention of the British public.

Among other noted figures attracted to Epirus and southern Albania were the English poet Lord Byron (1788–1824) who journeyed through the region with his friend John Cameron Hobhouse (1786–1869) from Bristol. A memoir of their travels was published by Hobhouse under the title (reminiscent of Pouqueville), *A Journey through Albania and Other Provinces of Turkey in Europe and Asia to Constantinople during the years 1809 and 1810*, London 1813. Soon thereafter, the British physician Sir Henry Holland (1788–1873) from Cheshire, who was a passionate traveller from an early age, left the volume *Travels in the Ionian Isles, Albania, Thessaly, Macedonia etc. during the Years 1812–1813*, London 1815. It included a fascinating account of his meeting with the tyrant Ali Pasha and a description of his journey from Janina to Tepelena. Also of interest for the realm of Ali Pasha was the volume *Travels in Southern Europe and the*

*Levant, 1810–1817*, London 1903, by the London-born architect, archaeologist and writer, Charles Robert Cockerell (1788–1863); and *Travels in Sicily, Greece and Albania*, London 1820, by the Reverend Thomas Smart Hughes (1786–1847) of Warwickshire, who left an account of his journey from Preveza and Janina to Gjirokastra, Tepelena and Berat. Benjamin Disraeli (1804–81), the prime minister of Great Britain, was also enthused by his visit to Albania (i.e. Janina) as a young man in 1830, and the Scottish political figure David Urquhart (1805–77) left an interesting account of his travels in southern Albania (Gjirokastra, Tepelena, Berat, Kavaja and Durrës) in the two-volume *The Spirit of the East, Illustrated in a Journal of Travels through Roumeli during an Eventful Period*, London 1838.

With the exception of Pouqueville and Leake, however, these volumes, although they are all absorbing in their own way and contain a plethora of interesting observations, are simply narratives of journeys undertaken in this little-explored region.

The first Western author to leave us good accounts of expeditions to northern Albania and Kosovo was the German-Austrian geographer, Ami Boué (1794–1881), in his monumental, four-volume *La Turquie d'Europe ou observations sur la géographie, la géologie, l'histoire naturelle, la statistique, les moeurs, les coutumes, l'archéologie, l'agriculture, l'industrie, le commerce, les gouvernements divers, le clergé, l'histoire et l'état politique de cet empire* (*Turkey in Europe, or Observations on the Geography, Geology, Natural History, Statistics, Customs and Habits, Archaeology, Agriculture, Industry, Commerce, Various Governments, Clergy, and the History of the Political State of this Empire*), Paris 1840; and in the two-volume *Recueil d'itinéraires dans la Turquie d'Europe: détails géographiques, topographiques et statistiques sur cet empire* (*Itineraries in Turkey in Europe: Geographical, Topographical and Statistical Details on that Empire*), Vienna 1854. Boué was devoted in particular to geology and botany, but provided much useful information on many other subjects in his travels through the Balkans. Not to be forgotten is the German botanist August Grisebach (1814–79), who made an unplanned

trek through the mountains from Prizren to Shkodra in 1839 because the Ottoman authorities would not let him travel directly from Kosovo to Bosnia. The account of this journey is given as part of his volume *Reise durch Rumelien und nach Brussa im Jahre 1839 (Journey through Roumelia and to Bursa in the Year 1839)*, Göttingen 1841.

Amidst all of the above authors, it was Johann Georg von Hahn who first focussed specifically on Albania and the Albanians in an objective, scholarly manner. His interests were broad: history, geography, language, literature, popular beliefs and traditions, politics, trade and economics. Although he was not a gifted writer, Hahn was a passionate scholar and an intrepid explorer. He journeyed not only through the above-mentioned regions of southern Albania and what is now northern Greece – travels that had almost become fashionable in the period – but also ventured into more inaccessible regions that were still virtually unexplored in his time, such as the valley of the Drin and Black Drin rivers in the northern Albanian mountains, which, if known at all, were considered too dangerous for foreigners to visit.

### Johann Georg von Hahn

Johann Georg von Hahn was born in Frankfurt am Main (Germany) on 11 July 1811 as the third child of the military surgeon Philipp Franz von Hahn and his wife Elisabeth Zucker. He attended secondary school in nearby Mainz and studied law at the universities of Giessen and Heidelberg. In the winter of 1832–3, his father sent him to Paris as a reward for having finished his law exams with a doctorate, and he thereafter spent some time in Vienna and Munich.

It was in that year (May 1832) that Greece, after a long and bloody struggle, ceded from the Ottoman Empire and was recognised as an independent country. A wave of philhellenic euphoria took hold of intellectuals throughout Europe, and in particular in Germany. Greece, the blessed land of the gods, was



Figure 1 Johann Georg von Hahn.

finally free. What the new country needed was a monarch, and the three Great Powers (Britain, France and Russia) chose for it young Prince Otto (1815–67), the second son of King Ludwig I of Bavaria. After years of war, the new Kingdom of Greece initially had no government, no public administration and no court system. Officials were swiftly assembled at the court in Bavaria and they set off for Greece to endow it with an orderly German administration.

Hahn had met King Ludwig in Munich and, through various contacts, had been given a posting at the Bavarian foreign ministry. It was in this connection, in the winter of 1833–4, that he was appointed to serve with the newly created

ministry of justice in Greece's new administrative capital, Nauplia, where he arrived on 1 March 1834. With its 'feverish climate' and amidst the political intrigues of Greek leaders struggling against one another and against the new foreign administration, Nauplia was not a pleasant place in which to work, and the new government proved to be sluggish in its endeavours.

In January 1835, Hahn was seconded to Tripoli (formerly Tripolitsa) in the Peloponnese where he worked for the law court, learned Greek and began to take an active interest in Greek folk culture. In the autumn of 1836, he was transferred to the appeals court of Chalcis (formerly Negroponte). It was no doubt here in the capital of Euboea, where he spent seven years, that he first came into contact with Albanian-speakers, the southern half of the island even today being in good part ethnically Albanian.

The Revolution of September 1843 in Greece forced many of the Bavarian and German administrators to give up their positions and leave the country, but Hahn chose to stay behind in Athens. From July 1844 he worked for the Prussian consulate in Athens and Piraeus, where he was active until July 1847, although he was not officially admitted into the diplomatic service. Athens was much more to his liking, but his lack of official status within the consulate caused him to look around for other positions.

Austria was at this time extending its diplomatic influence in the region and appointed Hahn to serve at the new Austrian vice-consulate in Janina, in Ottoman territory. He arrived there in August 1847 to take up his duties, which included reporting on Albania.

In order to fulfil his diplomatic obligations and because of his emerging scholarly interests, Hahn began to study the Albanian language. This was no easy undertaking because the population of the town of Janina itself was primarily Greek-speaking and he had no way of getting into the surrounding Albanian-speaking countryside for long periods of time.



There were few books or texts available to him aside from a new Albanian grammar published by the German linguist Joseph von Xylander (1794–1854), entitled *Die Sprache der Albanesen oder Shkipetaren* (*The Language of the Albanians or Shkipetars*), Frankfurt am Main 1835, and the recent Bible translations on which it was based. Hahn tells us how he learned Albanian. As teachers he hired two native Albanians who were studying at the Greek-language Zosimaia secondary school in Janina. With them he declined nouns and conjugated verbs by rote, using the vocabulary in Xylander's grammar. His Tosk teacher, Apostoles G. Panagiotides from Labova near Gjirokastra, was 'well acquainted with ancient Greek grammar, spoke French and Italian, but had never considered putting his mother tongue to writing nor had he ever thought about it as a language'. He listened to Hahn with astonishment and often with great impatience until he gradually gained an interest in the subject and began to understand what Hahn was trying to do. The Albanian slowly learned to correct him and even came up with sentence patterns of his own. Hahn then checked and compared his achievements with the Tosk translation of the New Testament and with the rules he found in Xylander's grammar. The vice-consul's other teacher was the young Konstandin Kristoforidhi (1827–95) who was intellectually inspired by Hahn to become a noted translator and scholar in his own right.<sup>1</sup>

In addition to learning the Albanian language, Hahn began collecting oral literature in Greek and Albanian – folk tales, folk songs, sayings etc. – and was indeed one of the first scholars to do so for Albanian.

In 1850, the Austrian trade minister von Brück suggested a re-organisation of the three Austrian consulates in Albania (Janina, Shkodra and Durrës) and proposed that Hahn, as vice-consul in Janina, undertake a journey to inspect the little-known region. Delighted at the prospect, Hahn set off in late July of that year and explored Gjirokastra, Kanina, Vlora and the plain of Myzeqeja and Durrës, where he suffered a bout of

malaria. From there he continued on to Elbasan, Tirana, Kruja, Lezha and Shkodra. In Shkodra he was once again overcome by 'swamp fever' and had to spend two months in bed; indeed he almost died there. After recovering somewhat in early October 1850, he managed to send a report to Prince Schwarzenberg in Vienna and excused himself for his illness. With the winter season approaching, he proceeded to Ulqin/Ulcinj (formerly Dulcigno) and Kotor (formerly Cattaro) and arrived in Vienna in late November of that year. He was never to return to Janina.

In 1851, Johann Georg von Hahn was appointed Austrian consul for Eastern Greece and took up his post on the island of Syros (Syra) on 24 October of that year. He used his first two years on Syros to organise the abundance of material he had collected in Albania and to arrange for its publication. The result was his seminal three-volume *Albanesische Studien* (*Albanian Studies*), Jena 1854, which laid the foundations for Albanian studies.

*Albanian Studies* was the longest work (760 pages) ever published solely on Albania and the Albanians, and the first work to include a great variety of fields. Volume One gives an account of his journey through Albania in 1850 together with notes on archaeology; detailed ethnographical material on birth, marriage and funeral customs in Riza (i.e. Labova near Gjirokastra), and on popular beliefs (the evil eye, ghosts and monsters, etc.); an account of customary law in the northern mountains; legends of several of the northern tribes; a treatise on the autochthony of the Albanians including so-called geographical and mythological parallels with ancient Greece; a study of the old Albanian Todhri alphabet that Hahn discovered in Elbasan and believed to be linked to ancient Phoenician; and a sketch of the early history of Albania (Pelasgians, Illyrians, Dalmatians, etc.) and of the mediaeval and early modern periods (Ostrogothic, Serbian, Bulgarian and Norman migrations, the Despotate of Epirus, and the struggles of Scanderbeg, etc.). Volume Two is a 120-page grammar of

Albanian (which Hahn writes in Greek script) and a good selection of early Albanian texts given in the original and in translation. These include Tosk and Gheg folk songs, sayings, riddles, Tosk fairy tales and a presentation of the early Albanian Muslim poet Nezim Frakulla (c.1680–1760), whom he calls Neçin of Përmet. Volume Three concludes with an Albanian–German and a German–Albanian dictionary based on Xylander.

*Albanian Studies* had no particular echo in the first decade after its publication. With time, however, and a certain ‘publicity campaign’ on Hahn’s part by means of letters to other scholars, the work became better known and was critically reviewed, mostly in very positive terms. By the twentieth century, it had become the ‘bible’ of Albanian research.

Hahn remained on Syros for seven years, with the exception of a short stay in Athens, and was absorbed during this time not only by his *Albanian Studies*, but also by Homeric research and comparative mythology. In 1858 he requested a longer period of leave for health reasons and returned to Germany in June of that year, where he spent some time with his mother and his brother Friedrich in Jena. In August, instead of returning to Syros, Hahn travelled with a young philology student called Wilhelm Gottschild to Vienna, Budapest and Belgrade to investigate another of his passions – a project for the construction of a railway line through the Balkans to link Vienna to the Aegean Sea. Of major importance for the project was the stretch from Belgrade to Salonica, which was unexplored and which, in Hahn’s words, would finally link the Aegean to the English Channel. To this end, supported by funds from the Austrian Academy of Sciences, he set out in September 1858 to explore the so-called Morava–Vardar corridor. Accompanying him on this journey through the central Balkans was an Albanian carriage-driver called Jovan from Prizren and a Serbian servant called Kyrillos Trifić from Kostajnica in northern Bosnia. The fruits of the expedition, which included a detour to visit Kosovo and culminated in

Salonica in December 1858, were presented to the public as his second major work: *Reise von Belgrad nach Salonik* (*Journey from Belgrade to Salonica*), Vienna 1861.

Following this arduous journey, Hahn returned to Syros and resumed his post. His proposal for the rail line does not seem to have had any particular impact in Vienna or elsewhere, so he turned his creative energy to the study of mythology and archaeology. It was in this period that he published the book *Mythologische Parallelen* (*Mythological Parallels*), Jena 1859. In the winter of 1862–3, he also finished work on another favourite project of his – the translation and publication of the Greek and Albanian folk tales that he had gathered largely in Janina. Of this he wrote: ‘The author had long wished to collect Greek folk tales, but searched in vain for a way of penetrating this secret kingdom until, in 1848, during a stay in Janina, he came upon the idea of making use of the students at the secondary school there.’ He asked twelve of the most talented students to gather folk tales for him when they went back to their villages for summer holidays. On their return he received a ‘mass of notebooks’.<sup>2</sup> Hahn also gathered Albanian folk tales on the island of Poros, and Albanian sayings on Hydra in 1862. The result was his two-volume, 658-page *Griechische und albanesische Märchen* (*Greek and Albanian Folk Tales*), Leipzig 1864, a pioneering undertaking both for modern Greek and Albanian oral literature. The Albanian portion of the book was modest in length compared to the extensive Greek material, but it was a major achievement. Hahn was the first person ever to record and publish Albanian folk tales.

In December 1859, Hahn contacted the Academy of Sciences in Vienna with new proposals for several more Balkan expeditions. The Austrian foreign ministry initially refused to support him, but Hahn was not to be discouraged. He was planning his greatest adventure of all – a journey up the Drin River by boat. ‘The Drin is the least known of all the rivers of Europe although it flows into the Adriatic a mere ten miles from the southern border of Austro-Hungarian territory.

No one before me has ever travelled the twenty hours along the river between the point where its two tributaries flow together and the coastal plain.<sup>3</sup> In the summer of 1862, he presented his plan to the Archduke Maximilian (1832–67), who was soon to be proclaimed Emperor of Mexico and had visited the coast of Albania himself on a hunting trip. The archduke agreed to provide light-weight boats, and the Austrian ministry of the navy agreed to give him logistical support. In June 1863, Hahn applied for leave to undertake the expedition and asked the Academy to send him a photographer. The Academy managed to interest the young Viennese chemist and photographer Josef Székely (1838–1901), who journeyed to Shkodra and took the first-ever photographs of the region, fifty high-quality images in all. On 31 August 1863, the party set out from Shkodra up the Drin River valley, but soon had to abandon their vessels and continue on foot to Prizren (with poor Székely having to return to Shkodra with his heavy equipment and join them later in Prizren). From there, they advanced through unknown territory up the valley of the Black Drin. Of this area, Hahn wrote: ‘Just as unknown as the united Drin is the valley of the Black Drin, from the town of Dibra to the point where the two rivers flow together. It is widely decried as a nest of thieves and is thus avoided by its immediate neighbours.’<sup>4</sup> Hahn survived the trip, his only problem having been that he could not understand the Albanian spoken in the region. From Lake Ohrid the party continued on to Veles on the Vardar River where boats had been constructed to take them down the river to Salonica, from where they continued on across the Dardanelles to Troy. The account of this harrowing journey is given in Hahn’s two-volume *Reise durch die Gebiete des Drin und Vardar* (*Journey through the Regions of the Drin and Vardar*), Vienna 1867 & 1869.

In April 1864, Hahn returned to Troy and, with visions of Homer in his mind, observed excavation work there. He lived on Syros until 1869, when he was promoted to the position of consul general in Janina. Hahn accepted the new post and was



**Figure 2** Portrait of Johann Georg von Hahn, by Ernst Ziller.

no doubt pleased at the prospect of getting back to Albania and the town he had known twenty years earlier. He set off for Trieste and Vienna in March 1869, but on 23 September 1869, before he could take up his new position, the life of the father of Albanian studies was cut short. Johann Georg von Hahn, who never married and apparently never showed any interest in the company of women, died in Vienna at the age of fifty-eight. He was buried at the Protestant cemetery of Jena.<sup>5</sup>

### A Critical Appreciation

Johann Georg von Hahn was the major figure of Albanian studies in his time, but really only became widely known by the scholarly community in the early twentieth century. The influential Ludwig von Thallóczy (1854–1916), an ethnic German historian who is considered himself to be the founder

of Balkan Studies in Hungary, wrote of him: 'For scholars of the [Austro-Hungarian] Monarchy it is an honour and a duty to promote this field of research since, in his *Albanian Studies*, it was an Austro-Hungarian consul general, J. G. von Hahn who brought Albania closer to us; indeed I would venture to say that he opened it up for us.'<sup>6</sup> The Viennese philologist and Albanian-expert Maximilian Lambertz (1882–1963) called him unhesitatingly the 'Founder of Albanology'.<sup>7</sup> The most accurate appreciation of Hahn's achievements was given by the Munich historian, Georg Stadtmüller (1901–85):

Hahn was one of those diplomats whose knowledge of the language, country and people, after long years of stay there, resulted in a pioneer achievement for south-east European research. He used the three and a half decades which he spent on Greek and Albanian soil to acquire profound expertise in the languages and in the customs and folk literature of these peoples. In the field of Albanian studies, where he had virtually no substantial predecessors, he opened up a new age of systematic research. His 'Albanian Studies', the fruit of his research in Janina, offered the first comprehensive description of the country and its people, including geography, ethnography, economics, history, archaeology and religion, but most of all language. Here he published the first complete grammar of the Albanian language in German and the first Albanian–German and German–Albanian dictionary. This great publication, for which Hahn gathered all of the material himself on dangerous and harrowing journeys, is a genuine pioneer achievement that opened Albania to scholarly research. The lasting significance of his work is seen convincingly in the fact that even today, after almost a century, the book is still indispensable for scholars. In addition to this main publication, which endowed him with a reputation in the academic world throughout Europe, Hahn published

other impressive works, including two travel descriptions of the region in and around Macedonia which he was the first person to explore systematically, and, in particular, his great edition of Greek and Albanian folk tales, which was a ground-breaking achievement in itself. His innate spirit of discovery also led him into the fields of comparative mythology and archaeology, although he did not succeed in making any lasting achievements here.<sup>8</sup>

The present volume offers representative selections from the works of Johann Georg von Hahn in English for the first time.<sup>9</sup> It is to be hoped that it will enable the reader to appreciate to what extent this untiring pioneer was essential to the discovery of Albania.

*Robert Elsie*  
*Berlin, August 2014*



PART I

TRAVEL WRITINGS



# TRAVELS THROUGH ALBANIA

*In June 1847, Hahn was appointed Austrian vice-consul in Janina. Among his duties was to find out more about Albania. He began learning the language and gathering information on the country's history, philology and folklore. His major journey through this 'terra incognita' took place from late July to November 1850. Hahn travelled through Gjirokastra, Vlora, Durrës, Elbasan, Kruja, Lezha and Shkodra to Ulcinj/Ulqin and Kotor, from where he continued by ship, returning to Vienna in late November 1850 to present his report. The following are excerpts from Volume 1 of Albanian Studies.*

## **The Population of the Vale of Gjirokastra**

This valley is formed by two almost parallel chains of limestone mountains, the highest peaks of which reach up to about 4,000 feet. They extend from south-southeast to north-northwest and look uninterrupted because the side valleys of the Suha [Shuka]<sup>1</sup> to the east and the Kardhiq [Gardiki] stream to the west stretch in such a manner that one does not notice them with the naked eye. Between the two chains there is a fertile valley that is about ten hours in length and about one and a half hours in width at its broadest point. Through it runs a river

that according to the inhabitants has no name although it is the main source of water in the region. Foreigners have named it after the capital of the region, Gjirokastra [Argyrokastron].

The southern continuation of the valley is in more of a north–south direction and is divided by ranges of hills, if I am not mistaken, into three parallel valleys, the most westerly of which is quite charming. The valley and the creek flowing in it are called Dropull [Δρόπουλις]. The creeks in these valleys, of which at least the two farthest ones are dry in the summer, form the said river into which they flow.

About two hours before the river flows into the Vjosa [Wiússa], the two chains of mountains approach one another, and the riverbed is so constricted by two protruding cliffs at the Subashi Bridge that one gains the impression that the valley was blocked here in earlier days and that its floor was once a lake until the water in it finally broke its way through the cliffs. From there onwards, the valley remains narrow (although there is room here and there for fields, broad and narrow), until it enters the wide valley of the Vjosa, into which the Drino [Dryno] flows about half an hour above Tepelena [Tepelén].

To the north of the Kardhiq creek, i.e. to the east of the river, the mountains rise to stony pinnacles that form a rugged highland, as will be described in a subsequent section. The western chain divides the valley of Gjirokastra from a smaller and more rugged valley that bears the Slavic name of Zagoria [Çagoria].

The Gjirokastra region is among the most densely populated in Albania and the structure of its population is so curious that it merits closer attention. The southern part of the valley is Greek and the northern part is Albanian, and the language border crosses the valley at about the middle.

The border between the two ethnic groups is much clearer here than in the west and south of the country where the two groups are mostly mixed. The language border is all the more curious because there is no natural barrier that would have created it. It seems to be an accident of human settlement.

Seen by an outside observer, the Albanian and Greek languages here and elsewhere in the country resemble the relationship between the German and French languages. That is to say, of fifty Albanians who can speak Greek, there is hardly one Greek to be found who can speak Albanian. Greek is the literary language of the Tosks, and their nomadic lifestyle may have helped them learn it. In general, the Albanians feel they are doing themselves a favour by learning Greek, whereas the Greeks look down upon the Albanian language as a barbaric idiom.

The Greek population is entirely Christian whereas the Albanians are partly Muslim. Gjirokastra and Libohova are inhabited by Muslim and Christian Albanians, the former of which constitute the overwhelming majority. The Greeks are considered foreigners here. The inhabitants of Nepravishta [Pravista] and Kardhiq and all the villages in Kurvelesh are Muslim. On the other hand, the villages of handicraftsmen in Lunxheria [Ljuntscherei] and Riza [Riça] on the northern part of the eastern side are Christian as are all the farming villages of the northern, i.e. Albanian, half of the valley.

Aside from the differences in ethnicity and religion, the population is also divided into different groups according to their trades, and such divisions are so remarkable that we must take a closer look at them.

All of the landed gentry of the region live in Gjirokastra. They own all the villages on the plain and they also have other property outside the valley. They live in high-rising solid homes that have only loopholes and embrasures on the main floor, but high windows on the third and fourth floors. The courtyards are protected by high solid walls, and the heavy gates are usually in double rows. The outer gate leads to a small forecourt that can be reached from everywhere in the interior of the house. The inner courtyard is situated so that one cannot see it from the other courtyard. These buildings much resemble the town manors of the Middle Ages and even the primitive, though characteristic style in which they are constructed is more attuned to the West than to the Orient.

The lifestyle of the inhabitants was, at least in earlier times, not unlike that of our knights. Individuals of means all spent their income on maintaining as many retainers as possible. With these retainers, they went to war whenever the sultan so commanded or whenever they entered the service of the pashas and potentates of the empire as mercenaries. In peacetime, when the parties who had divided the town up among themselves were in conflict – and this situation was often the norm – they used their retainers to protect their homes and wasted a lot of gunpowder by shooting from behind their walls at the embrasures of the neighbouring houses with which they were in conflict. As they all remained behind protective walls, blood was rarely spilled in the urban wars.

The lesser families were involved from time to time in highway robbery when the outlook was promising and whenever they could do so in secret. The aristocrats, for their part, never indulged in such activities openly as they did in Western Europe. It was more a pastime of the lesser families. Like the Roman knights, the aristocrats had another form of income better than warfare. This was profiteering from the imposition of customs, tithes and monopolies that were their exclusive domain. Usually, rival domains arose that supported various political groupings. This pastime has continued among Albanian aristocrats up to the present day and is still their prime occupation.

The landed aristocracy that keeps the mercenaries and collects the taxes was and, of course, is always faithful to the religion in power. The lower orders which are made up of fighters from the town and its surroundings gather around these wealthy landowners and make their living – some as soldiers and others as tax collectors. The more adventuresome characters among them engaged in soldiering and tax collecting for their own benefit. Few Muslims of the town engaged in commerce or manufacturing because these professions were not considered respectable in the past and were considered the domain of the Christian population.

The Muslims residing in the fine towns of Libohova and Nepravishta on the eastern side of the valley are closely related to the inhabitants of Gjirokastra by virtue of their customs, lifestyle and party politics. On the other hand, the Muslim inhabitants of Kardhiq and the Christian inhabitants of Hormova – places that achieved tragic fame from the terrible vengeance wreaked upon them by Ali Pasha – engage more in mercenary activities. The men of Hormova were also well-known as robbers. Their village is strategically situated in the above-mentioned gorge, such that travellers journeying northwards usually preferred the difficult, though hardly less dangerous trail through the mountains of Kurvelesh. The men of Hormova are by no means the only example of southern Albanian warriors who have remained faithful to the Christian religion. The Christian inhabitants of Zagoria that borders on this valley to the north-east and the region of Himara [Chimara] that is situated in the coastal Acroceraunian region also make their living for the most part as mercenaries. Such mercenary activities are common throughout Kurvelesh. However, most of the exclusively Muslim population are shepherds. Farming is less important because there are few fields and the soil is not rich. They say that Kurvelesh produces enough bread for eight months in a good year and four months in a bad year. The rest must be bought.

The slopes of the eastern mountain range are not as steep as those on the western side. They therefore offer more space and, here and there, one finds larger fields although the soil is far less fertile than in the valley itself. However, the land produces enough to make farming worthwhile here. This is particularly true of the middle section across from Gjirokastra, which is known as Lunxheria. There are nine prosperous independent villages with houses scattered about over a broad expanse, in typical Albanian fashion, and surrounded by groves of trees. However, their Christian inhabitants are not farmers. The soil is not good enough for this occupation. They are labourers who do their work abroad, not at home. The population of Lunxheria therefore usually consists of women, children, old

people and the ailing who are left to work in the fields and, in particular, in the many vineyards, and take care of the houses. All able-bodied men go abroad and only return rarely to visit their homeland.

The same custom is to be found in the region of Riza to the north. Of the eleven villages there, that are located on the eastern side of the above-mentioned passes, six are inhabited by migrant labourers. The other four villages are so-called *çifligia*, i.e. they belong to Muslim landowners whose land is farmed by tithe farmers.

The people of Lunxheria are butchers, gardeners and occasionally merchants. A few families in the three villages of Lunxheria and in the two villages of Riza are hydraulic experts who since time immemorial have tended, as a guild, to the water pipes in Constantinople and therefore enjoy various privileges accorded to them in imperial *fermans*. Almost all of the men of Lunxheria work in Constantinople.

The men of Riza, on the other hand, are mostly textile merchants. There are also weavers among them. Several families have inherited skills in the art of healing. There is also some change from one profession to the other. For instance, the inhabitants of Labova [Ljabovo] were once all weavers. Now the weavers are in the minority. The majority deal in textiles. One of the families there, the Mihanchulates, who were almost certainly immigrants, were formerly shepherds. Now they all work for the same textile merchant.

These two regions are not the only homes of migrant Epirots. The aforementioned men of Zagoria and Himara spend their lives abroad as mercenaries. The Greek-speaking inhabitants of Delvinaki, whose region borders to the north of Zagoria and stretches in the west to the eastern side of the mountains of Gjirokastra, seek employment abroad as butchers and gardeners. They find most of their work in Constantinople. In the regions of Pogoniani, the capital of which is Delvinaki, and of Kurrendo, there are few villages in which the men do not work abroad.



The valley of the lake of Janina is bordered on its eastern side by a range of barren mountains that divides it from the Zagoria region. It comprises forty-four villages that, with the exception of a few farming settlements, are all inhabited by bakers, shopkeepers, publicans, physicians and tax collectors. There is hardly a town in European Turkey, in the kingdom of Greece or along the coast of Asia Minor that does not have a colony of labourers from Zagoria. They are even to be found in the remotest corners of Asia.

The same can be said of house-builders (for they are masons and carpenters at the same time) from central Albania, in particular from the regions of Kolonja and Dibra. There, not only whole villages but whole regions have one and the same profession. All the men in European Turkey and in the kingdom of Greece who build walls, fell trees and saw lumber are from Albania, almost without exception. There are areas that are inhabited exclusively by traditional woodcutters, sawmill people and diggers. These professions are carried out by journeymen who wander in groups under their master craftsmen and take pack animals with them to carry the material they need. It is said that there are 6,000 Epirot labourers employed in Constantinople and the surrounding region.

Most of the masons, carpenters and diggers return home around the time of the feast of Saint George and depart again at the feast of Saint Demetrius because they believe that they can only maintain good health if they spend the summer in the mountain air of their villages. This may be quite true because, at least in Greece, Thessaly and Macedonia, the number of villages that are considered unhealthy in summer is probably greater than the number of villages considered healthy. The above-mentioned labourers prefer to carry out their work in one spot, or at least in one area, but only return there the next year if they have not found something better. Where they go for work is thus an important issue for them. The groups emigrating for work under a master craftsman usually stay together, although it does happen that members of one group join another, or that a

whole group breaks up, though this gives them a bad reputation. The groups can join forces for major work, but more often than not, they separate into smaller groups and work in different places at the same time. A group of masons rarely consists of less than twenty men. Woodcutters are often in larger groups, and diggers from northern Albania often consist of over 100 men in a group. The master craftsman arranges the contracts and is often not on site with them so that he can look around for more work. The contracts usually involve a certain amount of money for a cubic ell [0.36 m<sup>2</sup>], which is the equivalent of two feet, but there are also contracts for day wages or for the job as a whole.

Merchants and urban handicraftsmen are not as consistent concerning the periods in which they return and stay in their home villages, and can be abroad for decades on end. Mention is made of a very rich merchant from Zagoria near Janina who died recently. He set off for his place of business a few days after getting married and only returned to see his wife twelve years later. This type of profession does not usually involve much movement because merchants tend to do their business in one place where they are considered to be local inhabitants.

The men of Epirus are usually industrious and thrifty, prosper easily and are thus able to provide their families with a certain degree of prosperity. For this reason, one sees a lot of impressive houses in such emigrant villages and many of the inhabitants dress in fine, colourful textiles, whereas the peasants tend to wear colourless homespun garments of wool and cotton. Many of the merchants from this region have attained great wealth. In Epirus one thus finds whole regions consisting of families whose men are working abroad as labourers and merchants, and whose professions are handed down from father to son. [...]

Finally, let us turn to the last group among the inhabitants of this valley. These are the farmers. Like everywhere else, they are at the proverbial bottom of the barrel. All the farmers, without exception, are tenant farmers since the land they work on belongs to Muslim owners in the towns. As elsewhere in the Orient, the harvest is usually divided into three parts: two parts

for the farmer and one part for the landowner. There is no serfdom in the Ottoman Empire as such. Legally, the tenants have the right to move wherever they want, but in practice they seldom do. It is equally rare for a tenant farmer to be driven off his land by the owner. The sons usually take part in the farm work with their fathers. If there are only daughters in a family, it is the husband of the eldest daughter who inherits the farm. There is no right to force tenants to work, but the Muslim landowners usually take the female personnel off the land. Acts of violence are occasionally committed by these landowners against the girls and women, but they are not approved of. The relationship between the landowners and the farmers is, however, usually patriarchal. The farmers regard their landowner as their protector and advisor to whom they can turn in times of need and who can represent them in contacts with the authorities and other persons. Formerly, acts of despotism could only be held in check by custom and tradition, and it is evident that there were occasions when those who did not respect custom and tradition committed terrible crimes and violence. Revolt against tradition is, however, not in the character of the Albanian. [...] This latter population group is a class of servile, unpropertied farmers who exert no political weight in the valley.

We have endeavoured here to paint a picture of the various groups into which the population of this valley can be divided on the basis of origin, religion and profession. These divisions lead one to wonder about the relations between the groups. In fact, these groups all live in strict isolation from one another – there are no marriages between them. The members of the groups marry exclusively within their own communities. It may come as no surprise that the Muslims and Christians do not intermarry, although in other regions of Albania, e.g. the district of Vlora [Avlona] such marriages existed at the beginning of the century and they are still no rarity in the isolated regions of northern Albania. But Albanian Christians will not mix with Greek Christians. What is more, no Albanian

handicraftsman would ever marry into a family of Albanian farmers. [...]

### Gjirokastra

In earlier times, this town was a sort of aristocratic republic that paid obedience to its ruler, the pasha of Delvina, to whose pashalik it belonged, but only to the extent that circumstances required. Whenever the pasha in question had great power and was energetic in character, the men of Gjirokastra bowed to his will. Whenever this was not the case, they ignored the reigning governor and lived on their own.

The power of the governor was never so great as to suppress the private squabbles that the men of Gjirokastra indulged in among one another of their own volition, or that they inherited as blood feuds from their fathers. In Ali Pasha's time, there were few houses in Gjirokastra that were free of blood feuds, and the manner of construction of these houses makes it evident that they were designed for protection in bad times.

The proprietors of such houses, who owed blood to someone more powerful, often cowered in them for their entire lives, without ever leaving them, and universal ceasefires were more of an exception in this town. Hardly a day ever went by that two feuding houses were not shooting at one another. Sometimes the whole town was up in arms because there were political conflicts in addition to the private feuds. Whenever an important issue was involved, one party took up arms en masse against the other side. However, these blood feuds calmed down quickly whenever the overlying interests of the town were at stake. The hostile parties could join forces for an expedition, but once it was over, they began their old squabbles anew.

Despite all of this internal discord, Gjirokastra survived the reign of Ali Pasha better than anywhere else in Epirus. He only managed to conquer it in 1812. As a first step, he constructed a small fortress on a hill on the plain opposite the town. The men

guarding it were to harry the town, to prevent goods from entering the valley, to seize and carry off the livestock, and to prevent farming on the fields owned by the town proprietors, etc. All of these activities were carried out over time with greater or lesser intensity and were sometimes given up entirely. They caused many a skirmish between the attackers and the townspeople, such that everyone was in a more or less permanent state of war. At the same time, whenever Ali passed through the valley, the town would fire a couple of cannons in his honour as reigning Vali, and many of the men of Gjirokastra were in his service.

The latter circumstance finally enabled Ali to take possession of the town. When the time was ripe – and Ali was a master in such strategy – he doubled the wages of his soldiers on pretext of a foreign war, and let this be known in Gjirokastra in particular. Many townsmen then went over to his side and he was able to take the town without a fight because those who remained were not strong enough to oppose him. This is what the people of Gjirokastra told me. Pouqueville has a different account of the story and he may be right.

Once he had seized the town, Ali endeavoured to fortify his gains, as he always did. Many of the leading families were ostracised and sent off to distant locations, having been forced to exchange their property at a loss for other places of residence. Then, on a promontory that separated the two parts of the town from one another, he built a citadel. It was constructed in Venetian style, possesses huge casemates, and is overlooked from several locations in the vicinity. It is already in ruins and shares the fate of all of the fortresses built by Ali. Either he had no idea of how to build a solid fortress or was not interested and let his merry construction workers do whatever they wanted. They do not understand how to put stones together in this region to make them hold and stand as a wall. Here, the two sides of the walls are built separated from one another and the space between them is filled with gravel. The only bonding agent they know is whitewash or moistened earth. [...]

Ali constructed the fortress of Gjirokastra in such haste that it was finished in one and a half years, complete with a large palace and other requisite buildings within the walls.

However, blood feuding proved to be a greater foe than Ali could overcome, and it was only done away with by his grand vizier who passed through Gjirokastra after having vanquished the last hereditary pasha of Shkodra. He set the ransom for blood feuds at 1,200 piastres. Those in 'blood debt' hastened to pay their debts and, as an old man told me, 'from that moment on, they were all able to leave their homes and go out onto the streets.'

The town stretches over three rocky promontories that are divided from one another by ravines. There are therefore three separate parts to the town. Springs and wells are rare and most of the population is dependent on cistern water. An aqueduct that Ali Pasha built into the citadel is already in need of repair. Whoever wants to visit the neighbourhoods on the sides of the ravines must be surefooted. On the heights, many of the roads are very difficult to use because they go along the steep sides of rocky ledges. The general impression left by the town with its free-standing, looming and individualist houses is curious but, on the whole, quite picturesque.

### Kardhiq [Gardiki]

The reader who has in mind what Pouqueville wrote about the terrible revenge wreaked upon the town by Ali Pasha in 1812, because of the insult to his mother and sister, will be prepared for sombre visions of destruction and desolation full of blood and lamentation. Indeed, what else can be reported of a town, where all the able-bodied men were cut down in one single day and all the women and children were sold into slavery? The situation has changed, however, and anyone visiting Kardhiq today will come across only two or three abandoned homes. All the others are now inhabited by the sons and grandsons of those who were slain. In the catastrophe, Ali spared the family of his

friend, an imam from Kolonja, a family consisting of some thirty men, and allowed them to sow the fields at Kardhiq. A few years later, they were even permitted to return and live in the settlement. With time, their youthful descendants began residing in the abandoned houses and took possession of them. Nowadays, with very few exceptions, all of these families are flourishing, as are the houses that were in the town before the catastrophe, even though they are now fewer in number and less opulent. [. . .]

### Vlora [Avlona]

The term Cape Linguetta (Mod. Greek *Γλωσσα*) is derived from the form of the peninsula that resembles a tongue. It is the much-feared Acroceraunia that stretches far out into the Adriatic, and consists of a chain of bare rocky hills that is probably about nine miles long.

This range, together with its continuation to the north, the island of Sazan [Sásseno], forms the harbour of Vlora. The bay between the mountain range and the mainland offers deep and solid anchorage and enough room for whole fleets of ships, as it is ten miles long and has a maximum width of five miles. The island of Sazan is, however, too far away from Cape Linguetta and the rocky headland to the north of the bay to fortify the two entrances along the southern and eastern sides of the island. Although it gives no direct military protection, the harbour of Vlora has more to offer for a fleet than any other point along the Albanian coast. No other is so favourable from a geographical point of view and in terms of security, ease and supplies.

Vlora is situated approximately 140 miles from Dubrovnik [Ragusa], 70 miles from Brindisi, 50 miles from Otranto and 50 miles from Corfu.

The bay of Vlora serves as a refuge for all ships passing through the straits of Otranto that get caught up in storms or face strong headwinds. However, because the north and south winds can often last for long periods in this region and prevent

ships from leaving the bay, our ships, if they have a choice, prefer to take shelter in the bay of Durrës [Durazzo] from which they can depart more easily. In early 1846, for instance, thirty merchants were held back here for three months and were only able to leave the bay on the second day of Easter when a strong easterly wind arose. It should be noted that our merchant marine is better supplied in Vlora than all the others and rarely needs to go on land. As an example, a noted Austrian merchant spent almost three months in the bay without ever sending a boat to the shore.

When a strong sirocco is blowing, the *scala* [port] of Vlora, that is situated across from the headland of Linguetta, is a dangerous place for small coastal vessels. They must then withdraw to the innermost part of the bay that the natives call Pashaliman [Passaliman] and the Italians call Porto Raguseo which is situated ten miles to the south-west of Vlora. This may be the site of ancient Oricum, although no vestiges of the city have been found. The natives claim that in ancient times there was once a large city where the muddy delta of the little river forms a small freshwater lake, and that when the weather is good, one can see remnants of the walls under the water.

Vlora is the main port for the district of Berat which, however, procures many of its colonial goods and European products from Durrës. It also serves the commercial town of Korça from time to time as a *scala* for imports from Corfu. All colonial goods and European products, which are almost all imported under the Ionian flag, are in the hands of traders from Corfu.

On the other hand, all the exports from Vlora, which amount to almost twice the volume of the imports, go to Trieste, and these are shipped under the flag of Austria, and others.

Exports from Vlora consist primarily of the following items.

1. Oil. This is the main product and makes up three-quarters of the value of all exports. It all goes to Trieste. An average harvest is 10,000 barrels, of which about three-quarters are



exported by sea. The rest is consumed where it is produced or in the surrounding region. It is also exported to Gjirokastra, Monastir [Bitola] and northwards to Belgrade. The olive orchards cover the hills that stretch along the coast. There seem to be fewer and fewer olive trees as one proceeds into the interior.

2. Wool, about 50,000 oka, all going to Trieste.
3. Lambskins, 10,000 to 15,000 pieces, going to Trieste.
4. Maize, to Trieste and Dalmatia, and less to the Ionian Isles. Some oats to Trieste. Some rye to Cattaro, 300 to 400 *staja* of flaxseed to Trieste. Some beans via Corfu to Greece.
5. Valonia, about 150,000 Venetian litres, of which a portion from the southern mountain region of Himara is brought here for export. It is said to be equivalent in quality to the Greek average.
6. Salt.
7. Pitch. This is extracted from the mines of Selenica situated three hours to the north-east of Vlora and is exported through the *scala* of Vlora. The lease on the mines is normally paid through the customs duties. The leaseholder is not involved at all in the running of the mines. These are given over to the Vlach population living in the surrounding region. They transport the pitch to the *scala* of Vlora and are paid by the leaseholder at a fixed rate. The pitch is exported in two types. The *pegola grossa* exported in blocks is at least twice as valuable as the debris, the *pegola sottile*. About 300,000 Venetian litres of the former are produced and exported – half of it going to Trieste and Venice, and the other half to the Levant and Naples. The quantity of *pegola sottile* is equal to that of the *grossa*. It all goes to Trieste. In the Levant, this pitch is used primarily to coat the stems of grapevines to keep them free of insects.
8. Turtles, about 40,000, of which four-fifths go to Rijeka [Fiume] and Trieste, and one-fifth to Brindisi.
9. Some poultry, mutton, salted fish, dried fish eggs and butter to Corfu.

The *scala* of Vlora consists of a group of hovels that are used primarily to store the goods destined for import and export. Nearby are the ruins of an abandoned fortress, the badly built octagonal walls of which betray the hand of a Turkish architect. Neither here nor in the town are there any vestiges of the ancient settlement of the same name. The old form of the name, Avlona, has been preserved by the Greeks. The Italians have turned it into Valona, the Ghegs call it VlJones and the Tosks call it VlJones.

The town is situated half an hour to the east of the beach. On its eastern side, it nestles like an amphitheatre into a range of hills that attract the sunlight and make the heat extremely difficult to bear on windless days. Vlora has a bad reputation for fever and it is generally considered unhealthier in this connection than Preveza and Durrës. An expert, however, told me that, in his view, the climate here was no better and no worse than at any of the other *scalas* in this country, which are all located in swampy flatland along the coast and thus offer ideal conditions for the spread of fever.

The town currently has about 400 houses that are scattered over a wide area amidst shrubs and trees and are overshadowed by seven slender minarets. On the south-western side, the homes are grouped in a picturesque manner around the palace of the Vlora [VlJones] family that was constructed in pure oriental style for this oldest and most notable dynasty of the region. The town is a delight to behold from the nearby hills, but on closer examination it reveals one view after another of destruction and desolation. Wherever one looks, one sees decline and decay. The eye searches in vain for signs of progress and new life. The appearance of the inhabitants in these ruins confirms that there is no progress to be had in Vlora. I know of no other settlement in Epirus whose people look so ragged and neglected. How is one to explain this misery in the port of such a prosperous province and in a town that is surrounded by olive groves and fertile plains? The principal explanation is to be sought in the crisis of the local economy.

Up until the beginning of this century, the law of the jungle held sway here. Blood feuds and private conflicts were as widespread as they once were in pagan Germany, and the dire living conditions were the consequence of this lawless situation. The whole population was armed and was devoted to warfare and thievery. Part of the people lived off the rest, making their livelihood by means of extortion, oppression, highway robbery and livestock-rustling. The first two of these illicit means of livelihood were used by the nobles, and the latter two normally by the common people who fancied themselves better than the rest. The situation of the peaceful, mostly Christian farmers was extremely bad. Most able-bodied men went abroad and joined military formations maintained by those in power in the various provinces of the Ottoman Empire at a time when the civilian and military authorities were one and the same. The Albanians were once well-known and much-feared figures on the Barbary Coast, in Cairo, Mecca, Baghdad and Erzurum, as well as in Bucharest, Belgrade and Tripoli [Tripolitsa]. No other mercenaries oppressed the population with such wanton pleasure. No one was as experienced in looting and plundering as the Albanians. After shorter or longer periods abroad, they returned home with their money belts full of loot to enjoy with the benefits of their hard work. This part of the population was, however, productive for the country because it brought in large amounts of money each year. As such, these lawless regions achieved a certain prosperity without there being work in the country itself.

Ali Pasha brought about the first changes to this system by putting an end to the independence of the various chieftains and districts and by bringing them all under his control. This unusual character brought about a new chapter in the history of southern Albania. One could call it a period of law and order, though not by the usual European definition.

However, Ali Pasha brought about no change in the lifestyle of the Albanians. They remained warriors at heart. It is estimated that Ali Pasha maintained 30,000 mercenaries. The

Greek war of independence was a good period for them because the Porte was constantly in need of their services. The subsequent reform period, however, marked the beginning of an age of decline for the Albanian fighters which increased with the spread of the reforms that impeded their activities in one province after the other. This was accomplished by separating the civilian administration from the military, by rendering the provincial governors simple administrators and by setting in place special organs to keep the military under control. The latter was transformed from a group of undisciplined mercenaries into a standing army by the use of conscription. [...]

### Kanina

This name first appeared in the Middle Ages, replacing the ancient toponyms Byllis, Aulon and Oricum and is of particular interest for us Germans because the town appears as part of the dowry that King Manfred received when he married Helena, the daughter of Michael, the Despot of Epirus. Leake believes that the fortress was constructed on Greek foundations. When I examined the buildings, I discovered ancient hewn stones among the foundations, but they all seem to have been moved around. The fortress is now in ruins, but only seems to have been abandoned recently by its owners who spend the hot summer season here. These are the descendants of the first Turkish conqueror of the region, the famed Sinan Pasha of Konya, whose grave can be seen in a small *tekke* situated at the foot of the fortress. People come here from far and wide on pilgrimages because Sinan is considered holy by the Turks.

According to legend, he conquered the fortress of Marco Kraal, the final prince of Kanina, whose last descendant is a poor old man whose only son was taken away from him two years ago to serve in the army.

The layout of the fortress is similar to that of Acrocorinth, Patras and other fortifications in the region in that it is divided into several parts. The higher sections were separated from the

lower ones and could still be defended as a separate citadel whenever the lower sections were taken over by the enemy. I counted three separate sections in Kanina. The third one was a battery on the eastern side with exceptionally steep cliffs. What I thought was missing was a tower that is usually part of the final *réduit*. The building that housed the ruling family was in ruins, but I was shown a window in it from which the lady of the house threw herself to her death when she heard of the demise of her husband. The site of the house of Marco Kraal was also known, and people in town were still able to indicate the location of six or seven Christian monasteries and churches built along one of the ridges at the foot of the fortress. This site and the whole region around the gulf are rich in myths and legends. Dr Auerbach, who has served in Vlora for several years as a Turkish quarantine physician and has lived there with his brother, the English consular representative, has been collecting such tales for quite a while now, and one can soon expect very interesting material from this scholarly expert in Albanian affairs.

The hill on which the fortress is situated offers a panoramic view of land and sea. In the direction of the water, one can see the whole expanse of the bay, Cape Linguetta, the island of Sazan, and the outline of the flat coastline up to Durrës. On the interior side, one can see the Plain of Myzeqeja surrounded by fair mountain ranges behind which the peaks of Tomor and Kudhës [Kudessi] rise majestically.

### Myzeqeja

The coastal plain beginning near Vlora consists initially of a narrow strip of land skirted by hills. The hills disappear after about two hours, though the area, through which the road to Apollonia leads, does not yet become a real plain, because this latter settlement was built on a 200-foot-high hill.

It is only north of the village of Pojan [Pójanni] that one reaches the broad plain of alluvial soil that penetrates deep into

the interior. Very little of it is cultivated. It serves as winter pastureland for northern Epirus and Grammos. In the summer it is therefore depopulated and consists of abandoned Vlach villages, without a soul in them, making a curious and by no means welcoming impression. There is nothing to be stolen from these thatched cottages and any damage to them is repaired in the autumn.

The buildings in the farming villages along the road are curious, and I would almost say reminiscent of the tropics. The expansive yards are surrounded by hedges of live reeds and contain three, four or more little houses, one of which is used as a home and the others as stables and for equipment. The frames of the houses are made of wood and the roofs are of reeds. The walls are also of reeds, insulated at the most with a thin layer of mud or cow dung. Only the narrow wall in front of the fire is made of clay bricks. As in the homes of Greek peasants, the fire itself burns three to four feet away from the middle of the wall, on which various household utensils hang: jugs, pots, etc. Along this wall runs a two-foot-high and two-foot-wide clay bench. The floor is made of clay, too. There is no hearth, no table, no chair nor stool. Bedding for the night is rolled up in the morning and stored against the wall. Lighting and ventilation are provided by the two doors in the middle of the long sides of the house. The main door is shut at night. The houses are about 20–25 feet in length, 12–15 feet in width. The living and sleeping room, where the fire burns, makes up only half of the space. The other half is for storage. The furnishings are very much as in Greece, including huge round wicker baskets with a clay lid that are used for storing grain. What are particular to the country are the two-wheeled carts that are very common all along the coast. Travellers hate them because of the screech of their hubs and axles that rarely enjoy a spot of grease, not only since they are an insult to the ears but because they awaken visions of thirst. Should the traveller be suffering from fever and not be drinking liquids to try to postpone an oncoming attack, he will most certainly spur on

his horse at the very sight of these carts to get away from the screech as quickly as possible. The dry grey mud covering the oxen pulling the carts does nothing to help conjure visions of Illyrian chariots, although it does protect the animals from the countless flies that accompany them on their slow migrations – not to mention the dust that these ancient animals stir up as much as they can. In short, encountering these ox carts is one of the most unpleasant things this author has ever experienced. And he was vociferous enough to stop them in their tracks whenever he could not get past them quickly.

Alongside the road run hedges behind which elm trees loom. Up these trees grow grapevines that form festoons as they drape gracefully from tree to tree. The reader will understand what a southern Illyrian landscape looks like if he thinks of the thickets of Lombardy.

There are numerous gypsies in Myzeqeja [Musakja] who are considered slaves of the Sultan. Their services are leased out annually like other state assets (for about five purses). They serve as couriers, help bring in the harvest, thresh and husk the maize, etc. Many redeem themselves by paying off the tenant farmers. They also pay 60 piastres per tent and every man who has come of age pays six piastres of head tax (*harach*). Very few of them work as blacksmiths. Most of them make a living selling and taming horses, but yet lead an unsettled life, not without some horse-rustling, it is said.

Horse breeding was common in Myzeqeja in the old days and horses from this region were known throughout the peninsula, though they did not constitute a race of their own. The breeding has declined substantially and I did not notice any horses worth mentioning during my time in Albania.

Were the plains of southern Illyria healthier, they would be among the most blessed regions of the planet. But the fact that the inhabitants face other illnesses than those caused by the bad air can be seen in the following information received from a reliable source. When the current prelate assumed his post, the registry of the Greek diocese of Berat (officially known as

Belgrade, Canina and Spathia) noted the presence of 4,000 Christian homes. Within the space of less than one and a half generations, hardly 2,000 have remained. This decline refers in particular to Myzeqeja. The region has not suffered much from war and uprisings, but the pressure exerted earlier upon the Christian population is said to have been insufferable. Times have fortunately changed and it is to be hoped that, protected by the Tanzimat, the population will increase again. The reason for the decline is not so much apostasy but emigration. That is what people say anyway. But if one looks around at the decrepit appearance and feverish bellies of the babies, one wonders if the ailing mothers are able to bear children who will survive, and it becomes apparent that the main reason for the decline in population is the bad climate. A rapid recovery is unlikely.

### Durrës

Cape Pali may be seen at the northern end of the chain of hills that stretch eight miles in a north–south direction and descend to the coast. The southern end is Durrës [Durazzo].

This chain of hills begins about four miles from the coastline and appears to have been an island in ancient times and later, with alluvial soil, to have transformed itself into a peninsula. The sandy plain that connects it to the interior is only slightly above sea level. It is so low near these hills that the collected rain and the saltwater that penetrates the area during storms cannot run off. As a result, a series of lagoons has been formed. They are virtually dry in the summer and fill the town and surrounding region with feverish vapours that take on a highly destructive character in late summer.

It is said here that in former times, there was a deep channel, navigable by galleys, that linked the two bays formed by the hills.

The southern bay is named after the town of Durrës. It stretches four miles southwards in a broad crescent towards Cape Laghi, and its northern end is the town harbour. Although



it is completely open to the south, the ships do not regard it as dangerous when southern winds blow. They claim that the thrust of the waves is forced into a circle by the form of the bay and that the returning waves neutralise the effect of the incoming ones. The seamen complain rather about the unsafe seafloor which is constantly damaged because the ships throw their ballast overboard where they anchor. They attribute bad anchorage, at least in part, to the fact that in February 1846, of twenty ships in the bay, sixteen were hurled onto the beach during a terrible hurricane. All of these ships, some of which had cast three anchors, were so deeply embedded in the sand that only two of them could be put afloat, and this, with unimaginable effort. One can still see some of the hulks of the other ones.

Although nothing has been undertaken to improve navigation here – there isn't even any harbour police – every departing ship has to pay a port charge of one dollar, not to the imperial treasury but to a company that has taken over customs.

The present town takes the form of a small triangle running up the hill and is surrounded by high walls. The market street stretches from the sea gate at the harbour to the land gate. All the other streets are narrow, crooked and dirty. Nowhere is there an open space to draw a breath of fresh air once the city gates are closed in the evening. Including the suburb just outside the land gate, the town has a mere 200 houses and a population of 1,000.

It was here that I first saw a Barbary dove (Alb. *kumrí*, in Berat *dudî*), a bird native to the towns and villages of central Albania. It usually nests in the trees, but only near people's homes. It is very popular and is considered a good omen. When it coos on the roof of a house, this portends that a family member will be returning from abroad. Its cooing is actually not as melodious as its German sister, but more strident, and the first time I heard it, I thought a bird had been attacked and was enraged. The cooing of the grey pigeon, on the other hand, is more usual and pleasing.

Durrës owes its doves to the endeavours of the Nestor of the Austro-Hungarian consuls, Mr G. Tedeschini, who managed to settle them here after many unsuccessful attempts. I will always be grateful to the hospitality of this venerable gentleman.

We must leave it to future generations to decide on whether the ancient names Epidamnos and Dyrrachium are identical or if they refer to the two distinct halves of the town, Asty and Emporion, and where the battle took place that brought together Caesar and Pompey in their amazing marches and countermarches. I did not have any luck in finding the Chara root mentioned by the latter, although I suspect that it refers to the Salep root (*Orchis mascula v. morio*) that is pulverised into flour and imported into Albania from Salonica.

Durrës may be regarded as an outpost of Austrian commerce, for its trade routes link it primarily to Trieste and other Austrian ports, whereas the trade routes southwards and to the eastern Italian coastline, and indeed to the ports of northern Albania are insignificant by comparison. The volume of Austrian trade with Durrës under the national flag varies between 900,000 and 1,000,000 guilders, most of which involves exports from Durrës to Austria. Since, however, flags other than the Austrian are involved in this trade, although to a lesser extent, the total volume probably surpasses an average of one million guilders.

Movements of Austrian and foreign merchant vessels operating in Durrës are, with a few exceptions, restricted to trips to and from Austrian ports, and there are a number of ships that, year for year, also serve as postal vessels only on this line. The most common flag in this harbour is the Austrian. [...]

Exports from Durrës consist primarily of the following items:

1. Leeches, to Trieste, 400 to 500 vats at 2.5 oka in the winter and 2 oka in the summer. This article is in rapid decline

here as elsewhere. Ten years ago, exports were six times what they are now.

2. Cereals: (a) maize, 40,000 to 50,000 *staja* to Trieste, Bocca di Cattaro and the smaller Dalmatian ports, very little to the Ionian isles; (b) oats, 15,000 to 20,000 *staja*, and (c) flaxseed, 4,000 to 5,000 *staja* to Trieste, as well as small quantities of rye, barley, beans and millet.
3. Hides and leather, to Trieste and Venice: (a) lambskins, 20,000 to 25,000 pieces; (b) kidskins, 3 bales; (c) calfskins, 20 bales, as well as ox skins; exports have only been significant over the last two years because of cattle plague; (d) sheep and goat skins (Cordovani), 80 bales.
4. Wood: (a) timber for ship construction. There was formerly much export to Egypt, Malta and Tunisia, but this has decreased because the forests have been cut down and markets have slumped. For the last two years, 20,000 trunks of oak have been lying along the coast from Durrës to Ishëm, waiting for better prices; (b) barrel staves, 150,000 pieces to Patras for Corinthian barrels; (c) firewood, to Malta.
5. Olive oil, to Trieste. This is the main export article with an average harvest yield of 15,000 *ornen*. This does not account for the total harvest because, in addition to local consumption, large quantities go inland to central Roumelia and Serbia. Peqin, Kavaja, Tirana and Elbasan are the districts of Albania richest in oil. Exports from here, as from Vlora, Ulqin and Bar, all go to Austria.
6. Tobacco, to Venice. Around Durrës a type of tobacco is grown that is very good for the manufacture of snuff. The Austro-Hungarian board buys 3,000 to 5,000 bales of 50 to 52 oka for the factories in Venice and Milan, according to need, that are checked and moistened here and shipped in this state. The leaves ferment on board, for forty days from the moment they are loaded. This fermentation produces so much heat on the ships that the sailors have to sleep on deck, even though the tobacco is usually shipped

in December and January, and the rising vapours keep everything on board damp. The same ships are usually used for transport because the loading and handling of tobacco requires special care during the fermentation period.

7. Wool, to Venice and Trieste: (a) twice shorn (*lana angellina*), 20,000 to 25,000 oka: it comes from Dibra; (b) washed wool, 20,000 oka; (c) unwashed wool, 10,000 to 12,000 oka; (d) glover's wool (*lana calcinata*). Finally, 40,000 to 50,000 turtles are exported from here to Rijeka [Fiume] and Trieste and about 1,000 buffalo horns to Venice and Trieste.

### Kavaja

The basin of Kavaja, called after its main settlement, is about one to one and a half hours wide and five hours long. On its west side, it ends at the bay of Durrës and merges with the plain of the Shkumbin to the east. There is not much elevation between the two. Through the basin flow two streams, the Leshnika, that is half an hour south of Kavaja and has water in the summer, too, and the larger Darç, that flows right beside Kavaja. The two streams flow separately into the sea between the salt works. I have no clear information about the precise course of these streams.

The town itself is situated at the northern edge of the basin, scattered over a wide area, about one and a half hours from the beach. It has 1,000 Muslim and 150 Christian homes (mostly Orthodox Vlachs). The latter have a church about an hour from the town. There are two church ruins in the town itself, but permission to excavate here has always been denied. In general, the influence of the Tanzimat does not seem to have penetrated here as in Epirus because the Christian members of the provincial council (*medjlis*) have not been allowed to attend sessions.

What I found remarkable is the assertion that the town obtains all its imported produce from Durrës, but obtains its

manufactured, European goods, such as textiles and fezzes, mostly from Monastir [Bitola] and Constantinople. Two trading families from Kavaja maintain branch offices in the latter city.

### The Lake of Tërbuf

Looking southwards about halfway between Kavaja and Peqin, I saw a substantial body of water at a distance of about three hours. It appeared to be only a part of something bigger as hills hid what remained. It cannot be the 'lake of dunes' between the estuaries of the Seman and Shkumbin rivers that is marked Trebuchi on our maps and that the natives named after the nearby village of Karavasta, because it is too far inland. I made several inquiries and learned the following: the lake is called Tërbuf and is situated two hours south-southwest of Peqin, i.e. on the other side of the Shkumbin, and three hours east of the sea, with which it has no connection, in a longish valley of about three-quarters of an hour in width. It is half an hour wide and four hours long, and has a circumference of nine hours. It is marshy with reedy banks and is up to seven fathoms deep in some places. It once supplied 200–300 oka of leeches a month, but now fewer than ten. There is a particular type of fish that is caught there, called *pendëkuqë* [red-finned carp], but it is difficult to digest and tastes marshy. Fishing here is a privilege of the Tekke of Skopje, called Pasha Sinanit. The lake does not flow into the sea and is situated two hours from the Lake of Karavasta, which is linked to the sea and is much larger. The air around the Lake of Tërbuf is very unhealthy. Because of my weakened feverish condition, I withstood the temptation to verify this information, though I have no doubt as to its accuracy because it stems from several people who either catch leeches there or have spent time there fishing. The lake is not on our maps. Vaudencour's sketch makes it difficult to ascertain whether he means this lake or the Lake of Karavasta.

In this connection I learned that the village of Remas, three full hours north of the Seman (a dreadfully swampy place which I passed through earlier), is said to be located in the bed of the river of which the marshes are all that remains. The Lake of Tërbuf is three full hours to the east of this.

### Peqin

The location of this town is given wrongly on all of our maps because it is not on the southern, but on the northern bank of the Shkumbin. It is not two but five hours from the sea, and not twelve, but seven hours from Elbasan. It is thus not south but south-east of Kavaja, which is five hours away. And finally, the road from Vlora to Durrës does not run through Peqin. It passes rather across the Shkumbin River near its estuary at the village of Bashtova, the archaeological remains of which will be referred to below. However, the road from Durrës to Elbasan, the Via Egnatia, does pass through Peqin. This became particularly apparent to me when I asked around and was always told that there was no other road from Kavaja to Elbasan except the one through Peqin. Peqin may thus be the first station of the Via Egnatia, Clodiana. But this is only a hypothesis because our maps are unreliable and the Peutinger Tables contain many orthographic errors. The countryside around Peqin is hilly all the way up the Shkumbin valley to where the valley ends at Elbasan. The road runs along the north bank of the river and for much of the way, it skirts the slopes descending to the river; yet when I used it, it was passable and well maintained.

A quarter of an hour from Peqin, I came upon a channel with seven watermills that irrigated the surrounding fields. The father of the ruling bey had it dug by the mostly Muslim farmers of the area about twenty years ago by unpaid labour, something quite remarkable that shows just how passive the local population is. The seven watermills are leased out on a yearly basis for 90,000 piastres (about 9,000 guilders CM). The

town has ninety houses in scattered groups in the wooded hills, and several distant hamlets that are considered part of the town. The centre of town has a pleasant market square adorned with an elegant mosque and a clock tower. Nearby is the wooden manor of the ruling family that has been governing the region since ancient times and constitutes a rare leftover of the Albanian feudal age. Its unwavering loyalty to the sultan has enabled it to retain its old privileges whereas most of the noble families of the region, including the last hereditary Pasha of Shkodra, in whose rebellion they took part, were deposed and banished.

The air is unhealthy, which is said to come from the many rice plantations around the town that produce about 15,000 oka of rice. Judging from the surroundings, I suspect there must be much olive oil, too.

### Elbasan

Elbasan is one of those inaccessible cities that have become rarer and rarer in Europe because of the railway. You see the city clearly at the northern end of the valley the moment you enter it. The pure southern evening breezes bring its slender minarets so close that you can hardly believe the distance is a full two hours, as estimated by the guides. Yet that is how far away it is. Of the boring journey towards it, suffice it to be said that the plain is badly cultivated and the river seems to wind its way invisibly out of the mountains at the head of the valley. Along the road not far from the town, there are large groves of willow trees that the unskilled eye might take for olive trees.

Elbasan has 2,000 Muslim and 200 Orthodox and Catholic houses. Of the latter, the 80 Albanian-speaking homes are in the fortress around their metropolitan church, and the remaining, Vlach-speaking homes are in the suburbs. There are also many gypsies in town, who, as elsewhere, declare themselves to be Muslims and work as blacksmiths.

There is much trade in Elbasan, and its bazaar is quite large, although it does not appear to be different from other bazaars in the country. It has narrow alleys covered in boarding or canvas that extend between low, plain-looking stalls with shelves. Wherever there is room, one finds items being sold on the cobblestones, too, and on market days crowds in colourful costumes swarm through the narrow lanes, though they are well-behaved and hardly make any noise. The wider streets have a two-to-four-foot-wide rivulet flowing through them. These streets also serve as passages for the animals. On both sides there are half-foot-high sidewalks for pedestrians.

Elbasan's most important trade ties are with Trieste, and three commercial families of Elbasan have branch offices there. Imported products such as Russian and Austrian iron and some manufactured goods arrive via Durrës, but most of the latter, in particular English goods and some German ones, are imported from Monastir. But Corfu is now beginning to export English manufactured goods to Albania via Vlora. There is not much trade with Salonica and Constantinople, and hardly any with nearby Berat.

That the Tanzimat has not yet taken effect here can be seen by the fact that local custom still forbids Christian traders from owning stalls in the market. In 1832, the Grand Vizier, having suppressed the recent revolt of the hereditary Pasha of Shkodra, passed through on his journey through Albania and, having torn down the walls of the fortress, issued the Christians a *bujurdi* [written order] giving them certain freedoms including the freedom to trade in the bazaar. The Christians had these rights confirmed in an imperial *firman* that, in accordance with local custom, was read out ceremoniously at the courthouse to make its contents known. Following this, five Christian merchants and a poor tobacco cutter called Thomas ventured to set up shop in the bazaar. Everything went well for a time, but when news reached the town that the Grand Vizier had been defeated and made prisoner by Mehmet Ali near Kutaya and that Shkodra had risen in revolt against Hafiz Pasha, the merchants



were summoned by the bey one evening, whose extensive palace is situated in the fortress and who served as protector of the nearby Christian neighbourhood, and were warned to close their shops in the bazaar overnight because they were to be plundered by the Muslims. The poor people heeded the warning and acted accordingly as swiftly as possible.

The next morning the Muslim population assembled to take counsel and consider what to do under the circumstances. The four leading families, around whom the population gathered, were so disunited that the town was divided into four parts and, little wonder, conflict soon broke out. In the dispute, one of the chiefs forgot himself and hit another nobleman with his pipe. All jumped to their feet and drew their weapons. Shots could easily have been fired and they would certainly have exterminated one another. But peacemakers intervened and nothing happened. However, in view of what had occurred, no decision was taken at the assembly.

A few days later, they decided to expel the governor appointed by the Pasha of Shkodra and did so with such resolve that his wife, in the throes of childbearing, was sent packing on her horse, too. She gave birth one hour later outside of town.

All during these events, the unfortunate tobacco cutter Thomas, unwarned, had continued selling his tobacco in the bazaar. The Muslims took their revenge upon him. The newly appointed police chief (*kapi büyük bashi*) appeared before his stall with his men and hanged the poor fellow on the spot, and was never called to account for his deed. The other five merchants managed to flee and, once the storm had died down, were given a fine of 11,000 piastres each. They then began to conduct their businesses from their homes and set up shops in them where their wives and daughters traded with the Muslim women who were not allowed to go to the bazaar. They had many customers because their prices were cheaper than those of the Muslims. This, of course, caused bad feelings among the Muslim merchants who tried to persuade the Christians to return and open their shops in the bazaar, giving them written

assurance of security and protection from the governor. But they always replied by mentioning the name of Thomas.

Less than five minutes from the south-east end of town, there is a stone bridge across the Shkumbin. Elbasan is located too far from the river on most of our maps. The bridge was built by the well-known Kurt Pasha of Berat, who played a role in the younger years of Ali of Tepelena. It has eight large arches and a couple of small ones in the bushes on both sides of the river. The principal concern of Turkish and perhaps Byzantine bridge-builders was to put as little pressure as possible on the arches and to alleviate side pressure on the pillars. The keystones in the archways often serve as the pavement or at least are directly under the pavement, and the archways fall steeply to both sides, with the pavement rising again towards the next arch. To know how many arches a Turkish bridge has, the traveller has only to count the hills he crosses. The pillars are penetrated by niches, by one large and long one and two smaller ones on the sides, that often give such bridges a certain grace. But that is not how the Bridge of Elbasan appeared to me. The stone bridge of the Kir River near Shkodra is a fine example. I know of nothing built of stone comparable to the simplicity and grace of that bridge. It looks like a breath of the Divine. I must admit that I saw it during a wonderful sunset. One-arched Turkish bridges over little rivers are usually too high, daring and flimsy to be truly attractive. There are such bridges, five to six metres in width, that are forty, fifty or more feet above the water and without railings. Only those not susceptible to dizziness can ride over them without dismounting.

On the way to the bridge, I passed a rectangular plaza surrounded by a five-foot wall and planted with ancient cypress trees. This is where all the Muslim inhabitants celebrate Great and Little Bayram. No mosque in town would be big enough to hold the religious ceremonies that take place during such feast days. A number of old mullahs in white beards sat smoking in a circle. In the background was a mosque – a truly enchanting vision of the Orient, rare for Albania.

If one looks eastwards from the Bridge of Kurt Pasha, one can enjoy an amazing view of chains of mountains stretching in a north-south direction, the farthest towering above the nearer ranges and separated from them by the river. Behind the town is a ridge of hills called Mali i Krashtës, Cradle Mountain. To the right behind it is Mali i Shushicës, behind that Mali i Polisit, and in the distance is Mali i Mbelishtës. To the left is Mali i Gibaleshit and behind it is Mali i Çermenikës. This mountain region forms the western edge of ancient Candavia, through which the Roman Via Egnatia passes.

As mentioned above, the fortress, surrounded by moats, was torn down by the Grand Vizier and it is nothing particular to look at. Nowhere on its walls could I find traces of cyclopean stones or ancient ruins. Neither its plan nor its location on the flat land, when there are suitable hills in the vicinity, speak for its antiquity. No one knew anything about ancient walls in the hills.

Yet the distance between the modern town and ancient Scampis noted on the above-mentioned Peutinger Tables<sup>2</sup> cannot have been very great. I believe, as Leake does, that the same holds true of mediaeval Albanon which held the mountain passes leading from the area around Lake Ohrid to the coastal plain, and Farlati<sup>3</sup> informs us that Elbasan was the seat of the Bishop of Albanon.

As to ancient Albanopolis, the capital of the Albanian tribes mentioned by Ptolemy, I cannot concur that it is the same as Scampis, as the geographer asserts, because he marks the two in different locations.

In the first section of this book [*Albanian Studies*], I referred in general to the progress that Islam had made in Albania in recent times to the detriment of the Catholic and Orthodox Churches. There is much proof of this in the region of Elbasan.

To the east and north of the town is the well-populated, hilly region of Çermenika that has only free villages, i.e. no *çifliks*. It used to be entirely Catholic. In this region is the beautiful village of Polis, rich in animals, four hours to the east of the

town, near the Bridge of Hadji Beqari over the Shkumbin on the main road to Ohrid. It has sixty houses. This village is said to have been visited by Catholic missionaries twenty-five years ago and to have constructed a mosque twenty years ago. The reason here was not so much external pressure, but the need to belong to some religion.

In Mollagjesh, four hours north of Elbasan, there are apparently still old women to be found who were christened as Catholics. In earlier times, the farm women in the region used to bring their babies into town to have them christened as Orthodox, but the Orthodox Church refused out of fear of the Muslims.

Everyone from Polis to Mollagjesh and Bixëlleja [Bigulea], two hours from Elbasan, used to be Catholic. Place names like Shë' Mëri (Saint Mary), Shë' Mëhill (Saint Michael), Shën Jerk (Saint George), Shë' Nicola (Saint Nicholas), etc. have survived here and in the neighbouring districts despite the conversion of the inhabitants.

To the present day, Martanesh near Mollagjesh still has a large church bell. It is now used to call the inhabitants to assemblies. When the clock tower of Elbasan burned down and the bell melted at the time of the death of Sultan Mehmed, the townspeople wanted to purchase the Martanesh bell. This was, however, refused and they had to get a new bell from Trieste.

Mamli was also Catholic. Several families from this settlement moved to Elbasan 150 years ago and converted to Orthodoxy. The last two villages here belong to the district of Tirana. Judging from the many saints' names in the villages of the upper Erzen River, where Muslims now live, the situation was probably the same. There are many ruins of Catholic churches here, too.

All the mountain villages around Elbasan suffer from emigration. The emigrants are all Muslims and they leave to work as gardeners and construction workers in Constantinople where they remain for two to five years and make an annual 1,000 to 1,500 piastres. They travel overland and the journey

lasts twenty days. Expenses for food and accommodation amount to 150 to 200 piastres. Two to three caravans set off between the two cities every year.

The district of Elbasan is rich in olive oil. The oil is transported to Monastir and goes from there to Belgrade. Rice production hardly meets local needs. Some of it is exported to Berat, and nothing to Monastir.

Two and a half hours south-west of Elbasan there are some sulphur hot springs, the water of which smells like rotten eggs. At one site, called Llixha e Kodrës së Bujarës, i.e. the Spring of the Hill of the Noblewoman, there are fourteen such springs. The most distant ones are less than a quarter of an hour from one another and they are as wide as a man's arm. At another nearby site, Llixha e Idrait or Hidrit or Hidrahut, there are four springs, but they are farther apart than the above-mentioned ones. The smaller springs do not gush all the time, only now and then. The water flows up through the holes in the rocks and rarely reaches the surface. Here, the children sing thrice:

*Xhik Papaz! As na bën një herë me gaz?*

Papa Xhik, won't you make us smile?

Then the water begins to gush and the children giggle.

The people of Elbasan, as Ghegs, make fun of the Tosks. I heard them say the following of them: three soldiers-of-fortune from Labëria, all old friends, returned home. The first one wore a beautiful ring on his little finger. The second one had a new crimson jacket, and the third one had a pair of new silken sandals. At the place where they met, there was the corpse of a dead dog. The first man pointed to the dog with his finger with the shining ring on it and asked: 'Who killed the dog?' 'I am the one with my mighty chest,' replied the second, and beat with his fists upon his new jacket. The third man then stretched his foot out and said: 'Well, take it away then, and throw it into a ditch!'

The Monastery of Saint John's is one hour north-west of Elbasan in the fair valley of the Kuça [Kusha], and is the most notable Orthodox monastery in the country because of the body of Saint John Vladimir that is preserved here. It is not devoid of historical interest because it is perhaps the only building in central Albania left over from the time of the old Bulgarian Empire, destroyed by the Emperor Basil. For this reason, we shall provide here an extract from the legend of this Orthodox saint, as given in his acolouthia printed several times in Venice.

Saint John (Albanian Gjon) was the son of Neman and the grandson of Simon, King of the Bulgarians, who resided in Ohrid. He was born of his mother Anna, a Greek woman of royal blood, in the Serbian town of Vladimir after which he was named, and lived around the year 1000. He was a very pious man from an early age and lived with his wife, a sister of the Bulgarian King Samuil, in a celibate marriage. He once went hunting in the area that was a wilderness at the time, and glimpsed a white hawk bearing a cross. He followed it until the bird dropped the cross on the ground. This happened at the site where the altar of the monastery church now stands. Here he built a church and prayed in it seven times a day. He was interrupted in his pious endeavours by the invasion of the Emperor Basil. He put himself in charge of the Bulgarian army, defeated the Emperor and returned to his church.

The ascetic life he led gave rise to suspicion and jealousy on the part of his wife who believed that she had lost his affection to another. She complained to her brother, the king, who, in his anger, attacked his brother-in-law and wanted to slice him to death with his sword. But the king's sword was powerless against the body of the saint, and so the latter gave his own sword to the king with which he chopped the saint's head off. John picked his head up, rode to his beloved church and gave the head to the Lord. The murderer went mad and ate his own flesh. Out of remorse, his sister built the monastery around her husband's favourite church in which his head was preserved.

At one time, the Franks tried to seize the body and load it onto a mule. On the short way from the monastery to the Shkumbin, the sixteen of them were, however, confounded, so they threw the coffin of the holy man into the river so that the current would carry it down to the sea. But, behold, the coffin swam up the Shkumbin against the current, into the Kuça River and back to the monastery, where the inhabitants noticed a light radiating from it at night and placed it back where it had been.

But the body did not remain undefiled because the church was destroyed in an earthquake, though it was reconstructed in 1380 by the Lord of all Albania, Charles Thopia, whose inscriptions claim he was a nephew of the King of France.

This is the legend of the monastery. The Priest of Dioclea<sup>4</sup> has a different version of Vladimir. According to him, Vladimir was not a Bulgarian, but a Serb and so, by contrast, we hereby provide an excerpt of this version of the tale that is very interesting for this region.

Of the three sons of King Chualimir, the eldest one, Petrislavus, held Zenta; the second son Dragimir held Trebinje and Helma; and the third son Miraslavus held Podgoria (Podgorica?). The last son drowned in Lake Shkodra on a journey to visit his elder brother and left his kingdom to him. Vladimir was the son of Petrislavus. It was during his reign that Samuil, King of the Bulgarians, attacked Dalmatia. Vladimir withdrew with all his people to the *mons obliquus* (no doubt Montenegro). When Samuil, having demanded his surrender in vain, realised that he could not defeat him here, he left part of his army at the foot of the said mountain and marched on Ulqin [Dulcigno], which he besieged unsuccessfully. In the meantime, the Zhupan of the *mons obliquus* was negotiating with Samuil for the handing over of the king and, to prevent this, the king decided to submit voluntarily and was taken to Prespa, in the vicinity of Ohrid, where Samuil had his court. Samuil razed the towns of Decaratum and Lausium, advanced with fire and sword to Jadera, and returned through Bosnia and Rascia to his own country.

Cossara, the daughter of Samuil, fell in love with the young prisoner. Her father agreed to the liaison and gave him the whole province of Durrës (*totam terram Duracenorum*). He then invited Vladimir's uncle Dragomir to come down from the mountains and resume his rule of Trebinje, which he did.

Shortly thereafter, Samuil died, and his son, Radomir, advanced on Constantinople. The Emperor Basil, however, managed to persuade Radomir's cousin Vladislav to murder him. Vladislav murdered his cousin while he was out hunting, and took power.

Vladislav then invited Vladimir for a visit. But Cossara, who lived in a celibate marriage with Vladimir, persuaded her husband to send her instead of him to her cousin's court, where she was received with honours. The king repeated his invitation and sent a golden cross to Vladimir as a pledge. Vladimir, however, demanded a wooden cross because it was on such a cross that our Saviour suffered, and this was brought to him on the king's behalf by two bishops and a hermit.

Vladimir set off for the court and God protected him from ambush by the king while he was on his way. When he reached Prespa, he first went to church to pray, as was his wont. When the king discovered this, he sent soldiers to the church door who beheaded Vladimir the moment he came out. This happened on 22 May. His grave in that church became the site of many miracles, and crowds flocked to it. Vladislav then allowed the widow to take the body to Krajina [Craini] where Vladimir's court had been, and he was reburied there at the Church of Saint Mary's. The widow took the veil and spent the rest of her life in that church. Vladislav died while besieging Durrës, having been slain at dinner by an angel of the Lord. [...]

The monastery, situated near the Krraba Pass, suffered much from Albanian warrior bands over the years and was often plundered – most recently fifteen years ago when the men of Dibra and Mat held it for a longer period of time in their revolt against Qose Pasha, the army commander of Monastir. They even



destroyed the stone sarcophagus containing the body and stole the silver jewellery adorning the skull. But they did not damage these things and returned them to the people of Elbasan for a ransom of 700 piastres.

The saint's body is preserved in a stone sarcophagus accessible from all sides, on which the story of his life has been painted. Because the Archbishop of Elbasan was absent, the door was sealed with his seal and that of the two sextons. It is said that the wall of the main gate stems from the building constructed by Charles Thopia, whereas the rest is new. Some of the Byzantine decorations on the walls are not badly wrought.

### **Tirana**

The town of Tirana and the valley made a very favourable impression on me. The people who live here are considered the most active and roguish of central Albania. The fields, gardens and orchards are tended properly and the latter two are well-fenced. The people are properly and cleanly dressed, the farm animals well cared for, and in most of the villages, there are two-storey stone houses, which appear quite clean. Nowhere are there any traces of poverty or misery. I was particularly surprised by the town itself. I was expecting a sombre and dirty nest, but encountered a settlement extending over the watered plain with its gardens and trees. Closer inspection revealed, to my pleasure, that no one was starving or suffering.

There are two little streams that flow over the cobblestones of all the streets, taking all the refuse with them. The colourfully painted mosques, built in an attractive style and surrounded by poplars and cypresses, and the fine rococo tower with the town clock are surrounded by busy crowds of people swarming through the bazaar on official market days and making their way past the many ox carts. These are among the most picturesque views I saw anywhere in Albania. There was nothing unusual in the fact that the women from the surrounding countryside were at market, buying and selling

their goods, since this is normal everywhere. But what I had not seen anywhere else were numerous women in Muslim urban dress, with many young faces among them, who were sitting on the steps of the mosque or on walls, selling undergarments and old clothes.

By the way, I noticed few people with blonde hair and blue eyes here, whereas such individuals seemed very common in Labëria, Vlora, Tepelena and Gjirokastra. The farther north one travels, the rarer they become. I will refrain from commenting any further on Albanian racial characteristics because there is no country in Europe that offers more diversity of human forms than Albania, from individuals of great beauty to those of extreme ugliness [...]

How large is Tirana? My notebook says: 'The town has 2,000 houses, of which 100 are Orthodox (almost all Vlachs), six Catholic and the rest Muslim.' Boué, for his part, in *Turquie d'Europe* IV, p. 545, states: 'Tirana, town with 300 houses, or 2,000–3,000 inhabitants, of whom a good portion are Muslim Ghegs.' Pick and choose. But where, on page 543, he claims there are 8,000 inhabitants in Durrës, with others giving 9,000 to 10,000, my notes give 1,000. I am quite sure that I am right because I spent more time in Durrës, was given the same reply by everyone I asked, and this figure seemed to correspond better to reality.

Old though the place name may be, Tirana is a young town, being, according to legend, less than 250 years old. The following is told about the origins of the town:

Once there was a poor bey called Sulejman who had but one young lad as a servant. This lad dreamed one night that the moon fell from the heavens and landed on his right shoulder, radiating a strong light. When his master heard of the dream, he said to the boy, 'You will one day be a great man. Go in God's name and seek your destiny, because if you stay with me, nothing will become of you.' The lad set off and vanished, for he sent no word of his whereabouts. One day, a Tartar messenger arrived on horseback and summoned the bey to Constantinople

to appear before the Grand Vizier, and the bey of course obeyed the order. When he was received by the Grand Vizier, it turned out that the latter was his former servant. The vizier entertained the bey lavishly and told him he could wish for whatever he wanted. The bey asked for command over the Sandjak of Ohrid. And so it was. Having taken up his new position, the bey went on a hunting expedition and found himself one day in Tirana, which at the time was a village of fifteen houses and a couple of watermills. He was so taken by the location that he built the old mosque in the bazaar. When he journeyed to war against the Persians and feared he might perish, he gave orders that his body be embalmed and buried in the mosque. And so it happened. 240 years have passed since the death of Sulejman Pasha. The dynasty only died out recently and has been carried on through female lineage to the present Bey of Tirana.

The last descendant, Hadji Et'hem Bey, suffered a curious fate. He was driven from Tirana by the Bey of Kruja [Kroja], his traditional foe, and wandered for years as a dervish in Asia. With the help of the last hereditary Pasha of Shkodra, Mustafa Pasha, he regained his inheritance but, after the fall of Mustafa Pasha, he was deposed by the Grand Vizier, and Tirana was transferred to the rule of his traditional foes in Kruja, who still own it. Et'hem Bey fled to Elbasan, made peace with his foes and married the daughter of that family.

The following legend is recorded of the traditional enmity between Tirana and Kruja. Despite the hostile relations between the two towns, traders from Kruja managed to sneak their way into Tirana market. To recognise them, guards were placed at the gates of the town who pointed to a wooden beam and asked those arriving what it was called. Those who called it *trani* were recognised as being from Kruja, and beaten up, because the people of Tirana pronounce the word *trau*.

Migrant workers are nothing unusual in the region of Tirana. The inhabitants of the mountain villages go to Constantinople to work as miners. And in the town, it is still customary for the men to go to Egypt as mercenaries. Most of the food

reaches the town on beasts of burden. The horse-drivers of Tirana are famous in all of European Turkey.

### **Petrela**

This is the Albanian name for the mountain fortress that is known in history as Scanderbeg's Petrela. The traveller coming down from Krraba in the direction of Tirana will have it on his left for several hours. It is situated two full hours south-west of Tirana on an isolated peak in the mountain range stretching from Krraba to Cape Rodoni. This peak, probably over 1,000 feet in height, plunges almost vertically to the south-west and north, and therefore needs artificial fortification only to the east. The above-mentioned river Erzen interrupts the range on the northern side of the peak and flows in an east-west direction. The peak is thus the key to the upper valley that stretches towards it.

The peak is crowned with several tower-like constructions that are all in ruins. It conveys the overall impression of a dilapidated mediaeval fortress. The walls do not seem to contain any traces of antiquity and are all built with lime mortar. But the fact that the site was inhabited in ancient times can be seen in the fragments of cyclopean walls near the present settlement, about which we will come to speak. The settlement itself consists of several scattered groups, the individual houses of which are sprinkled among the olive trees. Despite its elevation, the settlement is rich in olive trees. The main part is situated on a small plateau before you climb up to the top of the cliff. It has a little bazaar with a coffeehouse, and near it is the grave of Balaban [Balambán]. He was a courageous, miracle-working man who lost his head in an enemy attack when the Turks besieged Durrës. He, however, picked up his head, rode with it to Petrela and deposited it at the site where his grave is currently situated. This is what they say in Petrela, at any rate. Barletius and Hammer, however, speak differently of Balaban. According to them, he was a local, Albanian-born warlord of the Turks who

did battle with Scanderbeg and remained at the siege of Kruja. The reader would thus be forgiven if he were to suspect that the legend of the ride of St John Vladimir had crossed the mountains and been taken up by the Turks.

In the old order of battle of the province, the banners of the various towns were arranged as follows: First came Petrela and then Durrës, third was Ndroq [Derénje], of which we will come to speak, and then Kruja, Tirana, etc.

### Kruja

In the range of mountains described above that forms the eastern edge of the valley of Tirana, there is one isolated ridge that is approximately three-quarters of an hour long and has a small plateau full of game at the top.

Along this ridge there are a series of hills with oak trees, low beeches and a few conifers between narrow gorges. In the midst of this range there is a promontory that rises sharply, mostly vertically to the south, east and north. It is only to the west that the slope is gentler. This promontory bears the fortress of Kruja that has natural defences on three sides and required artificial fortification only on the western side for it to be impregnable in the Middle Ages. This was accomplished with thick walls and several round towers.

The Grand Vizier, who played such a major role in Albania's history, had the parapets pulled down during his travels through the country in 1832 and it is thus in ruins. It contains eighty houses, the more or less dilapidated and neglected facades of which lead one to the supposition that there is little prosperity in the place. Among them rise two mosques, one of which with a minaret, the palace of the present governor of Tirana, who, as mentioned above, comes from Kruja, and the clock tower on the western zenith of the promontory. That area is said to be the place where Scanderbeg's palace once stood, of which, if my information is correct, no trace remains. Around the fortress lie 700 houses mostly amidst groups of trees. The

many olive trees in the surroundings make a particularly sad impression since most of them, with a few exceptions, froze during the last unusually cold winter (1849–50).

Leading to the fortress is a long, narrow alley lined with rows of shops and mostly covered. This is the bazaar of Kruja. It looks so old that one has the impression it has not changed much since the days of Scanderbeg.

Kruja is the market location for the surrounding area, not only for this side of the mountain but for the other side, too. The road from the region of Mat passes through the town and the Sunday market is well frequented by people coming from there. The bazaar is well stocked and offers an excellent overview of commerce and manufacturing in a provincial Albanian town. The word Kruja, the native name for the town, means 'spring' or 'fountain'. It is worthy of this name because it has several gushing springs, the strongest of which flows alongside the road.

Unfortunately my stay here was too short to investigate the local legends about Scanderbeg, but memory of him seems to have faded in good measure in this area. His name is still well known, but the people are no longer able to tell tales about him or other figures. The Albanian songs about him risk being forgotten because, when I asked about them, I was told they were no longer sung in the area, but that there were still some old people in Mat who knew some. Since I am not able to provide any new information about Scanderbeg, I must direct the reader's attention to the works of Barletius and Hammer for the history of Scanderbeg and his legendary military exploits, and limit myself to providing information only upon his misunderstood reputation in the population and on the political situation in the country at the time of his appearance. Since the biographer Barletius is only able to record the name of the hero's father, who ruled over Kruja and other towns, and since he later notes that the fortress was built by a member (Charles) of the mighty house of Thopia, this should suffice to show that George Castriota stemmed from a small and rather

obscure dynasty and that he owed his position as commander of Albanian forces not so much to his ancestry but to his own personality.

Who Scanderbeg's mighty neighbours were can be seen best on the list of Albanian noble families that took part in the meeting of princes of Lezha, a one-time Venetian fortress, where Scanderbeg was elected as their commander. Foremost among them was the powerful dynasty of Thopia that seems to have split into two branches: a southern branch led by Arianites Golem, later Scanderbeg's son-in-law, whose influence extended from the Vjosa to the Gulf of Arta, and a northern branch represented by Andrea Thopia and his sons, who apparently ruled from the region of Scuria between Tirana and Durrës, but who also reigned over the Krraba mountains and the plains of Myzeqeja. According to Barletius, their influence extended down to Himara. In addition to these were the lords of Dukagjin, the two brothers Nicholas and Paul, whose rivalry caused Scanderbeg much grief. Then, Luke Zacharias, Lord of Deja [Dagna], a bosom friend of Scanderbeg who was later slain by the Dukagjins; George Stresius, the son of Balsha and of a sister of Scanderbeg, who possessed land between Kruja and Lezha; the lords of Myzeqeja who were particularly close friends of Scanderbeg; Peter Spanós and his four sons; the Lekas, Dushman [Dushaman] and other lords and dynasties; and finally, the invincible Slav Stephen Cernovik with his two sons, who held power in the valley of the Morača and in particular at the fortress of Zhablak with its outlet to the sea. The coastal towns, including Shkodra, were, however, in the hands of the Venetians, and the war that Scanderbeg waged with them for Deja after the death of Zacharias shows that it was only the common Turkish threat that kept them together.

One must reckon here with six hours to travel from Tirana to Kruja which, in view of its elevated position, can be seen from all open portions of the road all the way to Lezha.

Those travelling along this road will see on their left side two noteworthy settlements, both on the other side of the Ishëm River, whose course was described above. They are to be found on the top of a ridge of hills that separate the valley of Tirana from the coastal plain. They are called Preza, with its 300 scattered houses centred on a market with a clock tower visible from the distance, and Ishëm, situated in the same range of hills, but to the west and not, as indicated on most maps, to the east of the river. This settlement also has 300 widely separated houses. The scattered layout of the settlements, deriving from a marked inclination towards isolation, is a characteristic that divides the Albanians from the modern Greeks and Vlachs, who usually live in close proximity to one another. The scattered nature of the houses makes it difficult to provide accurate distances between Albanian villages. Ishëm has a small fortress that is situated about three quarters of an hour south of the mouth of the river of the same name and that includes a small *scala* (wharf) that boats can reach.

No one knew anything about any unearthed ruins in the vicinity of these two settlements, but this should not stop future travellers from visiting them, and one suspects that the sites of the present settlements correspond to the old ones.

On Cape Rodoni, called Músheli by the Albanians after a small village there, there is a Catholic monastery called St Anthony of Padua, but it was abandoned when it became uninhabitable after an earthquake.

The most southerly Catholic parish in the valley is Derven, situated to the east of the road. I spent the night there after setting out from Kruja. The parish priest, who also ministers to the Catholic community of Tirana consisting of six families, had just returned upon hearing of my intention to visit. He lives in a yard of planted trees fenced in by oak planks. Here, too, was the little church looking more like a shed than a house of God, yet which, together with the priest's home, was considered one of the best buildings of the area. The bell tower



was a wooden construction. Everything was kept clean and made a favourable impression. The next day was a Sunday and the priest said: 'You will be alone here in the church because my parishioners are expecting me in Tirana.' 'Why don't you summon them here? You have a bell.' 'The governor has forbidden us from ringing the bell, but if you wish, we will ring it.' When he said this, I could see both trepidation and hope in his expression. The poor man longed to hear the bell ringing once again, but was aware of the possible consequences. I, of course, did not insist that the bell be rung, and remained there all by myself. This was the first mass I had attended in years, but my thoughts were not so much with the ceremony as with the hapless church. For the first time, I was quite overwhelmed by the misery of it all. I had lived for years in places where other churches were in a terrible state without my being particularly affected. People are often more self-centred than they realise.

From the village of Derven, the road leads for four hours through an oak forest interrupted only occasionally by clearings. It is named after the village of Shpërdhet and is the most important oak forest in all of Albania, stretching north to the Mat and covering not only most of the coastal plain between that river and the Ishëm, but also the valleys and slopes of the mountains to the east. I also passed through parts of intact coniferous trees that all seemed to be of the same age and were standing equidistant to one another as if they had been planted. Everything was so pristine that you would have thought you were in a park.

In some parts, the oak trees were interspersed with beeches. The beech trees here never develop into real trees. Several stalks grow from the same root and some of them reach a certain height. They reminded me of some of the oak groves in northern Euboea where the trees are so dense that no branches can grow and the trunks look more like hop-poles.

What was unusual was the quietness of the forest as we passed through. Not a single leaf was rustling, not a dove,

blackbird, roller, woodpecker or warbler was to be heard. Our party trod its way over the soft soil in absolute silence, except for the occasional cllop of a hoof against the roots. It was August and midday. I will never forget the forest of Shpërdhet as long as I live.

Over the last fifty years, the trees from this forest have been felled for ship construction and other usage. The forest used to supply trunks that were 12–18 inches thick. This quality is gone, but there are still some trees of 8–10 inches in diameter. For the moment (1850), there is little demand for them and tree trunks are piled up along the coast waiting for better days. A speculator in Durrës is said to have 20,000 tree trunks idling in the estuary of the Ishëm. The proximity of the coast and the ease of transport make such speculation tempting.

In this forest, there is a spring of cold mineral water that is worthy of its name *Ujë Qelbetë* (Stinky Source) because one can smell the stench of rotten eggs from the water half an hour before one reaches the spring. It gushes profusely and the jet is certainly the size of a large apple. The water tastes like meat stock and is used to irrigate the valley into which it flows. Its milky appearance signifies a strong content of magnesia. The inhabitants bathe in the mud produced by the stream and it is supposed to be very effective for all sorts of skin diseases. Near the spring there is a dilapidated church called Santi Quaranta [Forty Saints] that the Albanians called *Katërqind Shelëbumitë* (the Four Hundred Redeemed), and they hold a large market here on the feast day of the church.

### The Coastal Plain of Shijak

The coastal plain that stretches northwards from the peninsula of Durrës to Cape Rodoni is, calculated from Cape Pali, about five hours long and three to four hours wide. To the east it is separated from the valley of Tirana by the above-mentioned range of hills that come down from the Krraba mountains.

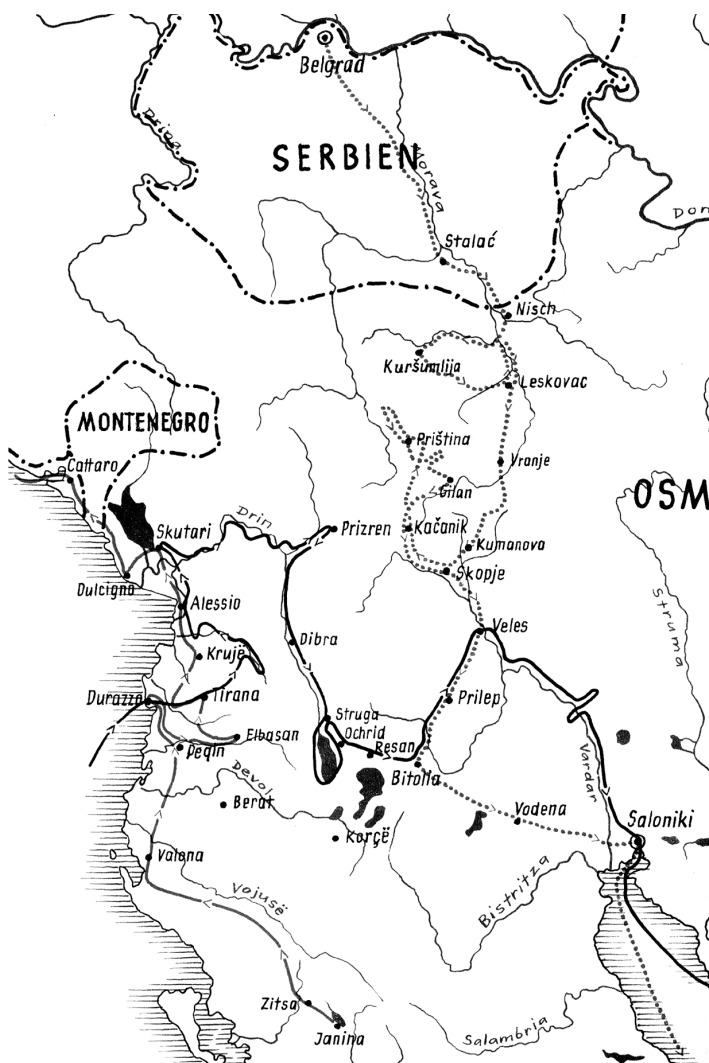


Figure 3 Map of Hahn's travels, by Gerhard Grimm.

Initially it stretches north–south, parallel to the coast, but then turns more westward and stretches into the sea, constituting Cape Rodoni, that the Albanians call Músheli. The coastal plain is very fertile, relatively well populated and well cultivated.

The population is partly Muslim and partly Catholic, but the Catholics form the majority. They are divided into two parishes (Juba and Biza). There are Vlach communities in three villages that, as elsewhere, are of Orthodox faith.

The whole area is named after its marketplace Shijak [Schjak], located three hours north-east of Durrës. The place is surrounded by many villages and consists itself only of market stalls and a mosque. It is used by the inhabitants of the area only on market day (Friday) and is empty for the rest of the week.

About three quarters of an hour south of the settlement of Preza, the above-mentioned chain of hills that separates the coastal plain from the valley of Tirana is interrupted by a fertile cross-valley of about a quarter of an hour in width. This valley links the coastal plain to the valley of Tirana, providing easy access by carriage from Durrës to Tirana without having to traverse any elevated passes.

The direct road from Durrës to Tirana, which takes eight hours, is however situated to the south of this valley and passes through the settlement of Ndroq [Nderénje], pronounced more like Ndrónj. It is situated halfway on the southern bank of the Erzen River and has a citadel on a high mountain. It is inhabited by Muslims only, who are very given to blood-feuding.

This settlement has the largest orchards of olive trees in the whole region and constitutes the northern border of the district of Peqin, being a narrow strip stretching south to north between the districts of Kavaja and Elbasan.

Five minutes to the east of the town there is the river, along the south bank of which the road winds. There is a 60–80-foot-high and 200-paces-wide cliff consisting of black earth mixed with stone and scree, through which the road must be dug anew

each year because the winter torrents wash it away. This dangerous part is called Karaboja (Black Colour) or Byé.

This appears to be the site where the Emperor Alexius was almost captured by the Normans in his pursuit. The emperor had set up his camp near the church of St Nicholas de Petra on the coast. Robert Guiscard, who held Durrës, won the battle. The emperor fled and the Normans pursued him to this place called *mala costa*, a steep cliff washed by the waters of the Charsanis (known by the Ghegs as the Erzen). His foes were about to capture him when Alexius spurred his horse on, leapt over the cliff and thus escaped his pursuers and easily reached Ohrid after two days of travel through a trackless countryside. Karaboja is about five hours from the coast.

About halfway between Ndroq and Tirana, the road crosses the river on a newly constructed stone bridge, leaves the riverbank and continues in an easterly direction towards Tirana.

In the vicinity, about half an hour south of the road, is the settlement of Arbana [Arbona], an ancient town according to legend, that is inhabited by several old Muslim families who have seen better days.

The Erzen continues through the southern part of the coastal plain and flows into the sea one hour north of Cape Pali. [...]

### Lezha [Alessio]

This name, in Albanian Lezha (Alexander), comprises three clusters of houses at a distance from one another, grouped at the foot of a hill on the left bank of the Drin River. In the centre is the bazaar constructed right on the left bank. To the east of it is the said hill that is about 500 feet high. On the flat top of it is a citadel that consists of a badly constructed and badly maintained circumference wall and only one building that is used as barracks for a force of about twenty Albanians.

The fortress hill forms part of the chain of mountains running along the southern side of the Drin. It dominates not only the coast but also the valley of the Drin and thus seems

destined to serve as an acropolis. The many remnants of cyclopean walls scattered about show that Dionysus of Sicily, whom historians consider to be the founder of Lissus, understood what nature had presented him with. Here, no doubt, was Acrolissus. But where was Lissus? From Polybius VIII, 15, it is evident that an *emporion* [market] existed separate from the *asty* [town] and that the two parts of the settlement were not connected by long walls. There was an empty space between them. No more can be interpreted for certain from his account of the conquest of the site by Philip of Macedon because the Drin River is strangely not mentioned, nor is the point of departure from which Philip set off for Lissus, nor the passes he must have crossed on his two-day march to the town. Lissus was, however, a port and the main part of the town. Acrolissus, on the other hand, was only the fortress.

It would thus seem logical to locate the town at the only safe port on the coast between Vlora and Kotor [Bocche di Cattaro]. This port is now called Shëngjin [St Juan di Medua] and is situated in the northern part of the bay that is formed by the headland that extends into the sea at the estuary of the Drin and a range of cliffs that come right down to the water. It is two and a half hours away from modern Lezha. It is here that ships now anchor for the town when they are too large to sail up the Drin, i.e. it serves as the *scala* of the town. There is a curious tale told about this place in Albania that, at the time when Dalmatia belonged to France, Napoleon intended to construct a major military port here.

It is now uninhabited and its climate is considered very unhealthy in the summer months. It is the epicentre of so-called Buna fever. My attempts to discover vestiges of ancient Lissus here were in vain. The ruins of the church at the harbour had no connection to antiquity. I asked many people about possible marble remains, inscriptions or stone blocks in the area but was told by everyone that there were none. [...]

To the east of the fortress hill there is a much higher, pointed rocky cone, on the top of which is a *tekke* after which the

mountain is named. Seen from the southern side, it looks very much like Mount Lycabettus in Athens, but is much higher.

The only direct import to Lezha is salt. It gets all of its manufactured and colonial goods from Shkodra. Exports are limited to maize (when permitted), some sumach, lumber and firewood.

The Drin is navigable for three hours upstream from the town for ships from 40 to 50 tonnes. Smaller vessels can reach Scela, near which the river flows out of a gap in the mountains.

### Shkodra {Skodra}

Lake Shkodra is about eight hours long and about three hours wide in the middle. At the two ends it is half as wide and gets much narrower. It stretches from north-northwest to south-southeast and is shown on most maps.

On the eastern side there is an arm that the natives call the Lake of Hoti but, from what I have heard, it is more of a marsh than a lake.

On its western side, the lake is flanked by a range of mountains that seem to rise out of it directly. The eastern bank is flat and the mountains in the background only reach the water at the aforementioned Lake of Hoti where they divide the plain into two parts. The upper part can be called Slavic and the lower part Albanian, the language border being only slightly north of the said ridge. The southern part of the plain extends southwards around the end of the lake and is only separated from the Drin by a row of hills called Rozafa, the western tip of which bears the fortress of Shkodra. The Buna [Bojana] flows down to the sea between this tip and the southern end of the eastern mountain range called Tarabosh [Tiraboski].

The main part of Shkodra is situated on the plain that extends from the hills down to the lake, with the hills to its back. The town stretches westwards to the Buna not far from the point where it flows out of the lake between the cliffs of Tarabosh and Rozafa. The latter name actually only refers to the

fortress hill that rises almost vertically about 400 feet above the banks of the Buna. The part that is least steep is on the north-eastern side towards the town. Here there is a road (the only one) up to the fortress.

The top of the fortress hill is quite flat. On it is the innermost *réduit* of the fortifications, built according to Venetian plans that contain the homes of the pasha and the military commander. At this location one can enjoy an unparalleled panoramic view. To the north are the lake and the eastern plain with a background of beautiful mountain peaks. Right at the observer's feet is the Buna River and its dilapidated wooden bridge, the bazaar district to the east thereof and a small suburb on the western bank. Farther to the east and separated from the bazaar is the main part of town adorned with over 20 minarets and groves of trees out of which the roofs of the houses protrude. To the south-east one can see the plain of the Drin and the various chains of splendid mountains in the background, one behind the other. In front is the elongated Tabaki neighbourhood between the southern slopes of the bare hills and the Kir [Kjiri] River that joins the Buna to the west of the fortress. Over it is a Turkish stone bridge to another verdant suburb called Bahçallëk [Bakalék]. This construction is indescribably light in appearance. Its pillars are separated by intermediate vaults in such a way that one can hardly believe that it can stand on its own. The other delicate vaults here and there cannot of course bear heavy weight and there is therefore little space between them. One has the impression of crossing the jagged crest of a ridge of hills rather than a bridge.

The Tabaki neighbourhood was shot to pieces in 1835 by the former governor Hafiz Pasha, against whom the people of Shkodra rose in rebellion because he wanted to force the Tanzimat reforms upon them, and still shows many ruins. It has the only mosque with a lead-covered dome, though it is not particularly attractive in style. The other mosques of Shkodra are not worthy of mention.



To the south-west of the fortress one can see the plain through which the Buna meanders. Unfortunately there are several rows of hills that block the view of the sea itself which is probably no more than five hours away from Shkodra. If the view were completely open in this direction, it would include all the beauties that nature has to offer. As it is, it has more of an interior character, and the splendid set of ridges offers no hint that the sea is so near.<sup>5</sup>



# TRAVELS THROUGH KOSOVO

*Hahn was particularly interested in the possibility of constructing a railway line through the Balkans to link Vienna to the Aegean Sea. Of major importance for the project was the stretch from Belgrade to Salonica along the so-called Morava–Vardar corridor. To this end, supported by funds from the Austrian Academy of Sciences, Hahn explored the region in September 1858 to see whether it was viable. On his arrival in Skopje, he made a detour to visit Kosovo in late October and early November 1858. The following are the excerpts on Kosovo from his book Journey from Belgrade to Salonica.*

## Kaçanik

Kaçanik is the perfect place for a nest of thieves because there is no other way around the Lepenc Pass. It is often described as such in old Serbian songs, and up until the beginning of this century it remained the home of highway robbers. It was only in 1807 that Reshid Pasha of Tetova [Kalkandelen] cleared the region of them after having burned down their forests. This is what Pouqueville and Boué tell us.

Very few of my readers will be aware that the soil of Kačanik is drenched in noble German blood. The events that

surrounded this catastrophe were first brought to light, as far as I am aware, by A. Arneth<sup>1</sup> in his *Life of Count Guido Starbemberg*. An extract here from the pages of this excellent work is all the more fitting since it throws light on the Albanians of this region. In this connection I have adapted the place names given according to what I thought best. Following the glorious victory of the Imperial Army at Nish and the conquest of that city, the greater part of the army marched northwards against Vidin and Wallachia. Count Piccolomini, however, who was in command of the troops that remained in Serbia, advanced swiftly southwards and took Prishtina and the plain of Kosovo, together with Kaçanik Pass. Indeed he sent his advanced forces through the pass, who took possession of the settlements on the other side, including the ancient capital of Dardania, Skopje. The Christian inhabitants of this region, who welcomed the brave and philanthropic Piccolomini as their saviour from the yoke of the Infidels, declared that they would be ready to return to Christian rule if they were given appropriate support. The Turks, for their part, were depressed at the success of the Imperial Army, such that this would have been a good moment for him to make peace. Alas, he missed the opportunity and a number of setbacks occurred which, to a large extent, undid the success he had achieved. The first disaster was Piccolomini's death – he perished in Prishtina suddenly on 9 November 1689. His successor in command was the Duke of Holstein whose cruel behaviour, arbitrary tax collection and tolerance of the excesses committed by his troops caused the Albanians to turn against him and return to the Turks. He nonetheless succeeded in defeating a Turkish army of 6,000 men that the pashas of Skopje and Sofia had mustered against him on 27 November, possibly near Shtip [Stippo]. However, in the same winter, a new Turkish army advanced on the plain of Kosovo, took the solid fortress of Kaçanik and defeated Colonel Freiherr von Strasser near that place. The colonel, who was already hated by the Albanians, had recently executed one of their men for a minor offence. Against the advice of the other officers, he then sent his corps of 2,800

men out to do battle with a Turkish force of 12,000 men on an open plain without any further support. He insulted one of the Albanians who had pointed out the senselessness of this operation, engaged in a verbal dispute with him and then shot him in the arm with his pistol. The enraged Albanians therefore abandoned him during the battle and went over to the Turkish side. Under a savage enemy assault, German troops showed immense bravery, but were crushed by the disproportionate strength of the foe. Despite his feats of exceptional bravery, the courageous but rash Strasser realised his mistake too late and paid for his coarse and reckless behaviour with his life. With him fell the heroic Prince of Hanover after having killed nine enemy fighters with his own hands, as did Counts Styrum, Grönsfeld and Auersperg, young men of great promise. Count Solar managed to flee in the dark of night with the few of his fighters that remained and took refuge in a dense forest. When he received word of the disaster, the Duke of Holstein abandoned Prishtina where he had assembled many supplies, and withdrew to Nish. Soon thereafter, however, General Veterani, Piccolomini's successor in command, hastened to the battlefield, although he was still suffering from injuries himself, took over command, bolstered the morale of his disheartened troops and attacked the enemy which fled when he arrived. Veterani then retook Prishtina and Prizren, which Imperial forces had earlier held, but with his forces now decimated! He only had 15,000 men under his command and had to leave 4,000 of them behind to hold the fortress of Nish. The second occupation of Kosovo by Imperial troops does not seem to have lasted very long because the fall of Nish and Belgrade soon moved the theatre of war to the southern border of Hungary.

An interesting fact emerges from these historical events – that in 1689 Dardania had a plentiful and warrior Albanian population, because it is highly unlikely in my view that the Albanians mentioned here came over from Albania itself to join Imperial forces. The question as to whether these Albanians were Christians or Muslims is not answered in the above-mentioned

work. An edition of source material about the Dardanian campaign of Imperial troops would provide a substantial contribution to our knowledge of this region and its inhabitants and would also be of great interest for our military history because names like Starhemberg and Veterani appear in it. No one would be better suited for this than the biographer of the former.

### The Plain of Kosovo

We spent the night in a spacious post inn that belonged to an Albanian whose appearance reminded us more of a *palikar* chieftain than of an innkeeper. The next morning we advanced for two hours up the bed of the Lepenc River towards the plain of Kosovo and then ascended through the scrub of its southern edge. Rain and fog had, however, set in by evening and we were prevented from getting as good a view of this fascinating region as we would have wished. All of the hills and mountains were wrapped in clouds right down to their bases and remained so throughout our stay. Even seeing things on the plain was often difficult because of the fog.

The plain seems to be rectangular in shape. One of its narrow sides stretches down to the northern slopes of the Sharr mountain range. These mountains rise to a majestic pyramid formed by Mount Lybeten [Ljubatrn] that drops suddenly to the north, east and south and is connected to the Karadag range by a series of hills through which the Lepenc River makes its way. This massive peak dominating the plain was unfortunately only visible to us on one evening, when we were returning from Gjilan to Kaçanik.

There are two river systems that share this plain. In its southern part, the Lepenc River, which makes its way along the northern and eastern slopes of the Sharr mountains, flows into the Vardar, as does the nearby Nerodime. In the larger northern part of the plain, the Sitnica River, a tributary of the Ibër, flows from south-southwest to north-northeast into the Morava,

which itself flows into the Danube Basin. At one place, these two regions are linked to one another by a bifurcation, the only one I know of in the whole Danube Basin. At a pond situated about one and a half hours from the source of the Nerodime, part of the water in the creek is channelled through a watermill and flows into the marsh of Sasli, whereas the main part of the creek flows into the Lepenc. This phenomenon was described to us by a *kavass* from Gjilan who stated that part of the water of the Nerodime flows into the Black Sea and the rest of it flows into the White Sea, which is the term the Turks use for the Mediterranean.

The aforementioned marsh of Sasli would seem to be the last remnant of a huge lake that covered the plain of Kosovo in pre-historical times and, curiously enough, has the two streams flowing out of it: the southern one (the Lepenc) and the northern one (the Sitnica) [...]

The road from Kaçanik to Prishtina reaches its former horizontal level at the village of Babush after it crosses the last scrubby hills about five hours from Kaçanik and six hours from Prishtina. Here it soon meets the Sitnica River. The village of Babush is only inhabited by one family which is divided among ten houses and traces its ancestry right back to the Battle of Kosovo in the fourteenth century. Their ancestor was given this village, several hours' march in circumference, as a tax-free fief as compensation for important scouting services he rendered to Sultan Murad I. His descendants retained their tax privileges until they lost them in the Tanzimat tax reform.

We spent the night at the inn of Rubofc, half an hour to the north, and from there, did not take the direct road to Prishtina, but turned eastwards towards the Monastery of Gračanica, which was one of the most renowned in the ancient Kingdom of Rascia, a realm that included the plain of Kosovo and the plain of the White Drin (Metohija). The word Rascia seems to have died out here and is only preserved by the Germans and Hungarians who call the Serbian immigrants of Banat 'Raitzen'. The Serbs have replaced it with the term Old Serbia

(*Stara Srbia*), but I have been unable to find out what exact area is covered by this term. In addition to the aforementioned plains, the valley of Novi Pazar is probably also included.

We stopped to talk to a group of peasants who were taking advantage of a holiday to go and meet their landowner in a neighbouring village, and asked them about the region. Despite the dismal weather, they were more than ready to provide us with information and I was struck by the theatrical manner in which these eight or nine men responded, all of them at the same time providing the same answer to the major's questions. The major was sitting on his long-legged mare the whole while, dressed in a large rain cape with the hood drawn over his head, and all the men's arms pointed in one direction whenever he inquired about a locality. One could not imagine a more perfect choir. The Albanians, on the other hand, behave in a more aristocratic manner. The general rule for them is that the eldest man speaks and the rest of them remain silent.

However, when our coachman asked for directions through the marsh, our choir suddenly fell silent and tried to sneak away as rapidly as possible. We took pity on these kind people and were satisfied with a simple show of the general direction we were to take. But we soon discovered that our pity had been misplaced because the coachman began to look worried and the horses and carriage sank more and more into the mire. We then caught sight of a peasant who was walking through the marsh in the opposite direction, not far from us. We hailed him over and he explained to us that he was looking for a cow. He was not sure whether it had gone astray or had been spirited off by the Albanians or by a wolf. We asked him if the animal was wont to wander only in the direction he had taken, which he denied with some consternation. We thus decided that he might as well come with us and that we would give him a tip for his services. It was evident from the expression on his face that he was perplexed at why we were offering him a tip when we didn't have to, but he simply replied 'yes, sir' and got in.



Without wasting any time, the major began to question him and got some information out of him about the bifurcation of the Nerodime, but it was so confusing that we had to ask him again and again. In the end, he was so petrified that he held his index and middle finger up in a V form and shouted: 'See, my lord, at low water the creek does this!' I suddenly understood what he was getting at, and when the peasant realised from the questions that I understood him, he laughed aloud and continued to hold his fingers up to me, calling on Christ and the saints as his witness to convince me that he was telling the truth.

In the meantime, the mud was up to the axles of the carriage, but we were unconcerned because the peasant assured us that we were advancing in the right direction. Indeed, we soon reached firm ground, being close to the foot of the mountains on the eastern side. After crossing a number of valleys and the hills between them, we reached the monastery. It is located on the left bank of the Gračanica creek which springs in the hills a quarter of an hour to the east and flows westwards onto the adjoining plain and, like the other east-west flowing creeks we passed, it flows into the Sitnica.

The monastery church is situated in the middle of a walled courtyard with several adjacent buildings and was built in Byzantine style. However, it contains a number of features I had never seen before. Each of its four fronts is divided into three sections, of which the lowest consists of three round arches, the central one being one and a half times the size of the other two. Above each of these central arches is a second section made up of four pointed arches. The rectangular shape they make bears the third section, which is the main dome. In the corners made up by the outside round arches are four secondary domes which, to my taste, are too isolated and lack unity with the base of the main dome.

The pillars supporting the four domes rise in the interior to an exceptional height, but they do not make a harmonious impression when taken together with the modest proportions

of the main vault they hold. If they had the proper proportions, these narrow round arches would evince great elegance. One good example of this style is the small church in Old Mistra, which is now, alas, half in ruins.

Reflecting the three external arches of the façade, the main body of the church contains three naves divided by walls. In the right nave is a wall to the right of the entrance with a huge inscription in Slavic painted in black letters on the white limestone facade. It consists of 82 lines, each of which has about 130 letters that take up some seven feet in width. They are said to be the deed of foundation of the monastery and to have been bestowed by King Milutin who is thought to have founded the monastery. Had the weather been better, I would not have hesitated to copy out the whole inscription despite its length, but there was no sense in such an undertaking under the circumstances. The monks of the monastery, of which there were four, including the abbot, told me that a traveller called Stephan had copied the inscription out early last summer. It took him eight days and he had them build a scaffold for him. I had heard of this traveller at the monastery of Sveti Otac where he had been, too. In both places, they knew only his Christian name, adding that he spoke fluent Bulgarian and travelled by himself without companions.

Across from the inscription in the same room are several letters in Latin script carved into a roughly sculpted, rectangular altar. In the chalcidicum of the church there is another larger rectangular altar which shows grave inscriptions from the heathen Roman period on both sides of it. At the entrance, there is also a gravestone dating from the same period. In the floor of the church there is yet another one, but only a couple of letters at the start of the line can be seen. I suspect that they were brought to the monastery from the Vicianum station along the great military road that led from Naissus [Niš] to Lissus [Lezha], that I will discuss in greater detail below. If Vicianum can be identified as the village of Çagllavica, it would only have been one hour away from Gračanica.

### Prishtina

From the monastery, we proceeded for one and a half hours to the town of Prishtina, situated in a north-northwesterly direction. To get there we once again crossed several valleys and ranges of hills. It is situated neither on the plain nor at its edge, but rather in a side valley at the point where the latter divides into two. Through it flows a creek that comes down the two upper valleys and unites there. According to my calculations, the town has an elevation of 1,776 feet above sea level. It has twelve minarets and a clock tower which rise above the mass of houses.

Prishtina (from Slavic *prišt*: 'boil, pimple') is the main military training ground, after Monastir, for the western half of the peninsula. It was no doubt chosen for its strategic military location, being between the restless Dardanian and Ghag Albanians and in the vicinity of the basin of Novi Pazar which constitutes the only link between Bosnia and the rest of the empire, a region which the Serbs have often penetrated to 'shake hands' with the Montenegrins. For this reason, the town abounds in soldiers bearing all kinds of weapons, though it is not an administrative centre, but rather belongs to the Pasha of Prizren and is the seat of a simple *mudir*. The current official holding this office is a small, old man who devoted much kind attention to us, but we did not come into contact with the military authorities.

On the next morning (1 November), everything was covered in white because a foot of snow had fallen overnight. Winter had arrived on this high plateau and, as the locals informed me, it was usually severe after its initial appearance. More bad weather was thus to be expected. I was therefore obliged to alter my original plan of continuing up into the Dardanian mountains and thought it best to get back to southern and lower climes as quickly as possible. I stayed for two days at the house of the mayor. The sombre rooms were in no way suitable for cheering me up. It was nonetheless an interesting stay

because the mother of the mayor told me that European travellers only rarely reached there. The last ones she could remember were two young Frenchmen who had stayed there eighteen years ago when her husband, mayor of the town, was still alive. When I mentioned the names Boué and Viquesnel to her, she could recall only the former, but her description of them was accurate. This was the only trace of the men we found, to whom scholarship owes the first detailed description of these countries. To what extent these lands were unknown before them, and indeed still are, can be seen in the works they left behind. How insubstantial they are – nothing to be preserved for posterity!

Since the weather had made a visit to the Dardanian mountain tribes impossible, we used our time in Prishtina to try and at least find out what we could about them. He were told for the first time of a geographical division of the land to the east of the plain of Kosovo into a northern part called Llap [Lab] and a southern part called Gollak [Golak]. It does not seem likely to me that the term Lab Golab, which the Albanians in Albania proper use to designate their Dardanian brethren, stems from these words. As I have written earlier, this latter term is most likely related to Golubinje, the old name of Vranje. *Gol* in Slavic means 'naked' and *golak*, like *golesh*, refers to a naked or barren mountain range. It is possible that the stony character of the Mrkonje and the two neighbouring ranges has given this region its name, but I was not able get any precise information about this, nor about the geographical extent of the region, although I am convinced that its borders could be closely defined after an on-site inspection thereof.

The region of Llap is named after the river, a tributary of the Sitnica, and encompasses the area about which we endeavoured in Prishtina to learn as much as possible, because it is still totally unknown.

Each of these regions can be divided into two parts, as seen from the following note I made: Upper Gollak comprises nineteen villages that hold their assemblies at the mosque of

Prapashtica [Prapashica]. The twenty-one villages of Lower Gollak gather near the village of Sfirca. The twenty villages around Prishtina, for their part, assemble in Orllan [Orlan], and the twenty-two villages of Llap gather in Podujeva [Podujevo]. From this note, it can be seen that the Dardanian Albanians hold popular assemblies, just as do the highlanders of the motherland but, alas, in Prishtina there was no Pater Gabriel to explain the detailed workings of these Dardanian assemblies to me, as he had done for the northern Albanian Alps. I was thus unable to learn anything more about them.

The Dardanian Albanians, like the Albanians in the highlands and Mirdita of the motherland, are divided into tribes, but tribal unity is weaker. This can be seen in the fact that blood feuds are matters for families and not for whole tribes. The obligation to take revenge is to be assumed only by the closest relative of the man killed, and likewise, responsibility for the murder is to be borne only by the closest heir of the murderer. It is questionable, however, whether the maxim 'he who inherits, takes revenge' is an integral part of custom here, as they claim. Stranger was another piece of information I heard in Dedić and that was confirmed by Albanians in Prishtina, that a daughter can inherit the property of her father. Upon her marriage, this property would then be in the possession of another tribe because, although the tribes are very scattered here, custom will still not allow marriages between members of the same tribe. In Prishtina, I was informed, however, that this rule was not always rigorously respected. If the heiress is able to inherit property and if she has to marry into another tribe, one main feature of a tribe is lacking thus from a legal perspective, i.e. the concept of compact tribal territory.

As in the motherland, a tribe here is known as a *fis*, a term that would seem to be related to the Greek φύσις. The descendent leaders of the tribes are called *nacer*, a word I did not encounter in the motherland. It is perhaps of Turkish origin.

The main tribes are distributed across the country approximately as follows: of the twenty-two villages of Llap,

twenty of them are Kelmendi [Clementines]. The other two belong to Bytyç [Betush]. They extend from Podujeva to Kurshumlija and inhabit most of the villages in Dedić. On the other hand, there are no Kelmendi in the regions of Vranje and Gjilan [Gilan]. They all regard the Kelmendi, who inhabit the northern Albanian Alps and are of Catholic faith, as their mother tribe, from which at various times individual families moved to Dardania. The Krasniqja [Grashnich] are to be found mainly in and around Prishtina and constitute virtually the entire Muslim population of that town. Aside from them, there are only fourteen houses of Emire, who regard themselves as a branch of a mother tribe in Novobërda [Novo Brdo]. These Emire are the only Muslims in the country that stem from Asia or, as they say locally, they are the only Osmanli in the country.

Upper and Lower Gollak are the main villages of the Krasniqja in the region of Prishtina, where they are more or less equal in number to the Kelmendi. They are also prominent in Leskovac and Mitrovica, and are equally to be found in the region of Vranje.

Mixed in with the Krasniqja in the region of Leskovac are branches of the Sopi (hay), Berisha and Gashi tribes. The Sopi [Sob] also predominate in the Moravica Valley. Almost all of the inhabitants of Karadag [Mal i Zi i Shkupit / Skopska Crna Gora] are Berisha. Gashi can also be found in the region of Masurica, most of which, however, belongs to the Krasniqja. The Gashi inhabit six villages in the district of Leskovac, but have no relations with the rest of their tribe in Prishtina and Vranje. Their one-time chief was Latif Aga, famed throughout the land for this bravery. He has now been replaced by his eldest son Reshid Aga, whose brother Emin commands the five-man garrison at the guardhouse in Lebane [Lebana]. I am grateful for some of this information to this Emin and one of his subjects called Hajdar, whom I noticed in particular because he was the only Albanian who showed from his behaviour that he would offer shelter to others [non-Muslims?]. I was also told about other large tribes: the Gashi, who were scattered

everywhere, and the Shala [Shalj], who constitute the main population of the region of Vushtrria [Vuçitërn] and who recognised the Catholic Shala of the northern Albanian Alps as their mother tribe.

These are the largest tribes. However, they share Albanian Dardania with a dozen smaller ones. The latter can be divided, in turn, into smaller groups. For instance, the Berisha have seven branches: 1. Asqur, 2. Ali Shiça, 3. Dodo, 4. Murtur, 5. Livosh, 6. Kuç, 7. Gec, and these branches divide into even smaller units. As I was not able to learn anything new about such matters in Dardania, I would ask the reader to refer to what I have already written in *Albanesische Studien* [*Albanian Studies*].

As to the population figures for the Dardanian Albanians, the only good point of reference is the report from the general staff of the army corps of Roumelia on the number of recruits that the Muslim population in these regions of Dardanian Albania offers in first-class recruitment in peacetime. This was at a proportion of 5:100. Other information I have gathered in this connection concurs with this.

Kurshumlija	39
Leskovac	84
Vranje	80
Prokop	45
Prishtina and Podujeva	82
Gjilan	83
Total	413

This makes a total of 8,260 Albanians of conscription age because the Muslim population in these districts is entirely Albanian, and there are no Christian Albanians there. This does not help us any further, however, because, although I asked around for an estimate of the proportion of conscripts to the total population, I was given no reply.

Fortunately, I received information in Gjilan that there were 3,800 houses in the district named after this town, of which

2,300 were of Albanian Muslims and 1,500 were of Bulgarian Christians. This information can serve more or less as a basis for a calculation. As I noted earlier, the Albanians tend to preserve their family units as long as possible from dispersion, and remain within them due to the fact that they are more inclined towards blood feuding and the law of the jungle than are the Serbs and Bulgarians. For this reason, I would estimate that there are at least six persons in the average Albanian home. According to this calculation, Dardanian Albania would have a population of about 70,000.

If we calculate the surface area of this region as being about 80 square miles, there would be a population of about 900 persons per square mile.

In addition to the above-mentioned districts, there are several others outside Llap Gollak and the regions to the east, such as the Moravica Valley, the source of the Morava, and parts of the plain of Kosovo. On the other hand, we can certainly assume that the lists used for conscription in this wild and savage land are far below the actual population and I therefore suspect that our figures are probably too low rather than too high.<sup>2</sup>



# TRAVELS THROUGH NORTHERN ALBANIA

*Hahn's last great research expedition took him into equally unknown territory – up the valley of the Drin River in northern Albania to Prizren, and from there, up the Black Drin River to Ohrid and down the valley of the Vardar River to Salonica. The journey, which received the support of the Archduke Maximilian, who was later to become the Emperor of Mexico, and which was financed by the Austrian Academy of Sciences, began in Shkodra in August 1863. The party travelled upriver by boat until they were forced to abandon their vessels and continue on foot. Among the members of the group was the young Viennese photographer Josef Székely who took the first photos of the region. The following excerpts are taken from the volume Journey through the Regions of the Drin and Vardar.*

The Drin is the least known of all the rivers of Europe although it flows into the Adriatic a mere ten miles from the southern border of Austro-Hungarian territory. No one before me has ever travelled the twenty hours along the river between the point where its two tributaries flow together and the coastal plain. Of more recent travellers, only Grisebach<sup>1</sup> caught a brief glimpse of it from a distance, and described it as

one of the most curious phenomena. Among ancient writers, Strabo tells us that the river stretched up into Dardania, but since that time, no one has actually confirmed or disproved this assertion.

The present author learned of this situation while he was preparing the material for his *Albanian Studies* (*Albanesische Studien*) and has, since that time, lost no opportunity to draw attention to the need for detailed investigation of the Drin. After ten years of waiting around in vain, he decided to carry the investigation out himself.

Just as unknown as the united Drin is the valley of the Black Drin, from the town of Dibra to the point where the two rivers flow together. It is widely decried as a nest of thieves and is thus avoided by its immediate neighbours.

The author had just as many problems getting information about the lower valley of the Vardar as he did about the valleys of the Drin. Some recent travellers had crossed it, but no one had actually travelled the length of it, despite the fact that a main artery of European commerce with the world will soon pass through this valley. I am referring here to the future railway line between Belgrade and Salonica. In the introduction to my book, *Journey from Belgrade to Salonica* [*Reise von Belgrad nach Salonik*], I expressed my views on the significance this railway line would have for Europe and for the Austro-Hungarian Empire, and the reader should refer to this text, so that everything need not be repeated here. I should like to limit myself to the remark (on page 4, footnote 1) about the distant future when railway lines will reach the tips of the peninsulas of Italy and Greece. This has already been achieved because the railway in Italy has now reached Brindisi and is thus complete. One can only hope that the railway in Greece will soon reach Piraeus, its terminus. There is little prospect of this at the moment, but there was equally little prospect of it in Italy in 1858.

The idea of the author was to connect the two river journeys. He planned to sail up the Drin as far as possible in portable boats,

carry on up the valley of the Black Drin and then sail down the Vardar to its delta on a boat being made ready for him in Veles (Köprülü).

The journey also offered an opportunity to carry out a survey of a completely unknown inland region of European Turkey by means of astronomical measuring equipment to survey the most important topographical features along the way. To this end, the author was joined by one of the most decorated officers of the Austro-Hungarian navy, Hermann von Spaun, a former marine lieutenant and now navy commander.

The author submitted the project to the philosophical and historical section of the Imperial Academy of Sciences and requested a grant for its implementation. The Academy accepted the author's proposal with the same support it had given to his journey from Belgrade to Salonica, and made available the requisite funds, for which the author is deeply grateful.

His Majesty, the Emperor of Mexico, who was formerly commander-in-chief of the Austro-Hungarian Navy, had earlier graciously promised to provide the portable boats and the crew needed for the trip up the Drin. When the author repeated this request to His Excellency, the former Minister of the Navy, Baron von Burger, he was given not only the funds needed to build the boats on site and for the crew, but also funds for all the survey equipment that would be needed, for which the author is also deeply grateful.

Shortly before the expedition was to begin, at the author's request, the Academy seconded the well-known Viennese chemist and photographer, Dr Josef Székely, to make an album of photographs of this unknown region. He carried out his duties with great zeal and enthusiasm and produced a series of pictures that can easily compete with the best that photography has produced in this field. The publication of the album unfortunately involved costs that were far too high, such that Herr Székely was left to decide on the subsequent distribution of the individual photos himself. [...]

### Benda

We left Tirana on the main road leading in an easterly direction to Matja. It passes through the southernmost of the five gaps in the Kruja mountains, which is named after the village of Skala of Dunja that is located at the western entrance thereof, three hours east of Tirana. [...] On the top of the ridge near the entrance to the Skala of Dunja is the village of Vença [Wendscha]. The natives claim that it was once a town and the see of a bishop. Indeed, among the dioceses of Albania, Farlati includes one called Benda [Bena], although without stating where it was located. The whole region is now inhabited by Muslims only. They make up 400 households in all, that are scattered about, in Albanian fashion, either as individual farmhouses or as loosely settled neighbourhoods that all fall under one name. For instance, the southern part of the eastern slope across from Vença is called Bastari and consists of 200 houses. If my informant counted them properly, it can be divided into thirteen different neighbourhoods.

After taking a first look at this valley, I decided to change my travel plans and spend the night in Vença to gather information on this new region. The people of Vença were, however, not too happy about this, and no one was willing to take us in. They said they had neither barley nor stables for the horses, and one could not leave the animals outdoors for fear of wolves. Our guide from Mat invoked the Prophet to denounce their lack of hospitality and used such injurious terms that even these sluggish villagers reacted to them, and I had to intervene to prevent a brawl. Finally, the chief of the village, a young man with a pockmarked nose who was dressed in gold-embroidered clothes, whom I had summoned, gave way and opened his house to us, after swiftly removing the women. In all of my travels, this was the only time that I ever had any difficulty obtaining accommodation for the night. But even when this was achieved, the people of Vença were not what one would exactly call amicable. If they had had the courage, I believe

that they would have entirely hindered me from inspecting their valley. The grumbling I heard from the men around me did not sound encouraging, but no one dared to leave any of my questions unanswered. Of course I directed my questions to those who seemed the most upset at my presence. The longer we talked, however, the more peaceful and courteous they became. By the time it got dark, we had established good relations, and I bid them farewell.

### Mat

The Mat region is very divided. This can be seen in the fact that it is inhabited by four different clans headed by one or more leading families, each of which is, of course, only a *primus inter pares* in the region. The Bozhiq inhabit the upper valley of the Mat, and then come the Çelaj who rule over the southern part of the valley. After this are the Olomani or Alamani, and the north of the valley is the homeland of the Zogolli. This is, however, only the general view for, on closer inspection, I found that these families were mingled and that all four of them were present in some villages. In addition to this, these families can be divided into what are more or less major groupings and smaller groupings that would need to be studied separately to gain a better understanding.

### Bushkashi

We left the *mudir* at two o'clock believing that we would have enough time to get to Bushkashi before sunset, since it was said to be three hours from Zogolli. However, the fox seems to have measured this timespan with its own tail, because we were caught by nightfall while we were still on the trail. We got lost in some cornfields and so I fired off a few shots to attract the attention of the people of the parish who had been waiting for us for several days. Almost immediately, the bells of a nearby church rang out and there were several shots fired that were

answered by others at closer and closer range. Although we were aware that bells were often rung to welcome special guests to Greek monasteries, we felt very perturbed about this dramatic noise coming from a Catholic community, that is, until we were informed that we were wrong to interpret this as a sign of welcome. It was quite the opposite! We had terrified the whole region that, since its separation, had kept a watchful eye on anything and everything coming from Matja. A group of armed men approaching from Zogolli in the twilight awoke mistrust and, when we fired our weapons in the dark, there was no longer any doubt that the men of Matja were on the attack, and they gave the alarm signal. Firing back would have made the situation all the more dangerous. However, some families who lived in the vicinity of the parish church understood who we were, and hastened down the mountainside with torches in their hands to meet us. [. . .]

The parish priest was a young and exceedingly intelligent Franciscan from Naples who had been able to make an impression on the wild natives and gain prestige among them. The vicarage, a one-storey building, consisted of three rooms and a kitchen, and was all spick-and-span, as was the new church. As another example of the geographical names of the Matja region, the reader should know that the parish is called Brinja, not Bushkashi. There is no actual village called Bushkashi or Biscasio as this term refers to the four villages altogether that make up the rural parish. The natives call it *sheber*, which is, of course, the Turkish word for 'town'. The remains of such a town can, indeed, be found one and a half hours to the north of Brinja, on the right bank of the Mat River, where one can apparently still see the foundations of a large church dedicated to Saint Peter.

The missionary priest believed that this settlement was the one that was originally called Bushkashi. He added that he had often asked old people from the region about this town, but that no one had been able to give him the slightest information about it. As to his parishioners, he noted that some of them

lived off thievery entirely, whereas others delighted in it as an occasional pastime. On occasion, Christians and Muslims – ten to forty men at a time – gather to go raiding, expeditions which they undertake down to the coastal plain as far away as the vicinity of Durrës. They are particularly keen on rustling grazing cattle, but will pilfer anything they can get their hands on. The followers of both faiths, of which the Muslims are a small minority, live here in complete equality and relative harmony. The priest denied that they intermarried, but was then forced to admit this fact during our conversation. It was said that in the neighbouring parish of Pedana, there used to be mixed marriages in which pork and mutton were stewed in the same pot, with the Christian spouse eating the one meat and the Muslim spouse eating the other.

Blood-feuding in this region is so unbridled that the parish priest is unable to do anything about it. In Matja, he stated, there are more weeks of the year in which more than one man falls victim to feuding than weeks in which no one dies. He insisted that he would accompany me to the archbishop because I would otherwise never get there alive.

### Delbnisht

According to the memoir of Monsignor Rafaele d'Ambrosio, the Archbishop of Durrës, there are 786 Catholic families living in the archdiocese. If we assume an average of five persons per family, this would amount to 4,000 souls. However, it is often said that up to twenty, thirty or more people can live under one roof in the mountains. For my part, I rather doubt if the villages of the unhealthy lowlands even reach the average. The memoir also shows that the Catholic Church is by no means in decline in this region as it makes reference to the conversion of fifty-four Muslim and ten Orthodox individuals over the last fifteen years. Of the former, one may assume that the conversion took place for non-religious motives, i.e. out of fear of conscription. However, this would not apply to the

Orthodox believers. The memoir also makes mention of the quite remarkable conversion of a nineteen-year-old Muslim called Zejnel Bajrami of Kurbin. On 24 March 1853, ignoring the pleas of his family, this courageous young man appeared in church during mass, threw himself down before the throne of the archbishop and begged, in front of the whole congregation, to be baptised, which the archbishop promised to do. The baptism took place at the following feast of Pentecost after he received instruction in the Christian faith and renounced both his inheritance and the bride that had been chosen for him in his childhood. He was given the name of Pasquale and showed such diligence and thirst for knowledge that the archbishop sent him to Rome in 1855 where he has been studying successfully at the Propaganda Fide ever since.

What will surprise the reader much more, however, as it did the present author, is a genuine and particularly Albanian custom that is observed in this diocese. There are no convents for women in Albania. However, there would seem to be an urge among Albanian maidens to live chaste lives. In order to achieve this among such a warlike people, they change their gender to male, thereby taking on male clothes, cutting off their braids, assuming male names and bearing arms, as is custom in this country, i.e. carrying flintlocks, pistols and *yataghans* [sabres]. This change of gender is sanctioned by the Church and is officially announced to the congregations in all parishes after mass, i.e. that a certain young girl has decided to live a chaste life, has taken on a male name and is from then on to be regarded as a man. No special oath is required for this change.

The change of gender is the only way a girl can free herself from a marital engagement and save her family from a blood feud with the family of the scorned groom.

There are presently four such male virgins. The most famous of them is Mara of Perlataj, a descendant of Scanderbeg's faithful commander, Peter of Perlati. She belongs to the Preza Doi family and lost her parents at an early age. Her uncle engaged her to a Muslim man from Lura. When she was



seventeen years old and the Muslim man came to pick her up, she appeared before the council of village elders and protested that the Muslim would force her to forsake her faith and therefore, in order to save her soul, she wanted to become a man. She thus demanded her father's weapons from her uncle and bears them to the present day as Peter of Perlataj.

Dila of Delbnisht and Brica of Bushkashi were not engaged when they changed their sex. The former is now called Petro and the latter Gjon.

Marçela of Tena in the district of Skela was in love with a young man who had been engaged to another girl in his childhood. When the young man was forced by his family to marry his fiancée, so as not to incur a blood feud with her family, Marçela changed her sex and is now called Gjin.

I rather doubt if there has ever been such a custom in the Catholic Church. Unfortunately, I forgot to inquire as to its antiquity, but one would tend to assume that it is not recent.

It is indeed rather surprising that this custom is not more widespread. After all, the 'poor women' Like ancient Greece, present-day Matja is 'armed to the teeth and sells its women'. The average price for a virgin here is 3,000 piastres and a young widow can be had for half of this. Nonetheless, after a long struggle, the present bishop has managed to rid the Catholic community of this barbaric custom. A Catholic bridegroom needs only to pay for the bride's wedding dress, the cost of which has been fixed permanently at 850 piastres.

He also succeeded in abolishing the expensive wake dinners as well as the loud mourning and the bloody scratching of faces and chests that were customary after deaths.

Accompanied by a constant firing of rifles, the bride, who is wrapped in a red cloak if she is a Muslim and a purple cloak if she is a Christian, rides on horseback to the house of her prospective husband, where she is destined to lead the life of a slave. Of particular wedding customs, I learned that when the bride in Bushkashi reaches her new home, two men climb up

onto the roof with a pretzel-type loaf of bread. They eat half of the bread and bless the new couple, and then throw the other half from the roof onto the earth.

Women's clothing here consists of dark-coloured bloomers and fringed aprons that are red for married women and black for unmarried women.

The memoir praises the piety of the Catholics here, their respect for clergymen and their hospitality. Any infringement of hospitality for guests gives rise to a blood feud between the host and the infringer. The memoir, however, criticises the tendency among both Christians and Muslims to be lazy, to rob and steal, and to indulge in excesses. For Muslims it also criticises usury, whereby interest on a loan can amount to 50 to 60 per cent annually.

The innocence and purity of relations between the sexes can be seen in the fact that both Christian and Muslim girls remain in absolute seclusion as shepherdesses with their sheep until they get married. I was told by everyone that adultery was punished by death, with the sentence usually being carried out by the relatives. However, despite my questions on the subject in many locations, I was unable to uncover a single case of such punishment being carried out.

### Shkodra

My travelling companions landed in Bar [Antivari] on 19 August [1863] with the three sailors assigned to accompany us, and by coincidence met Dr Auerbach there whom, during my short stay in Vlora, I had invited to come and visit me in Shkodra. It was thus with him that they rode to Shkodra the next day.

The commander began his inspection of Shkodra immediately, and Dr Auerbach set off to visit the town fortress. They were very disturbed at my long absence, because my journey from Durrës to Shkodra exceeded what I had estimated in my letter by no less than four days. As such, they were very relieved when I finally arrived.

Preparations began the next morning for our boat trip up the river. This was facilitated to no small extent by the fact that all the information I had gathered in Lezha about the new arm of the Drin River proved to be exact.

The commander inspected the boats on the lake and found a light, flat-bottom fishing boat to be most suitable. It was 12 feet long and wide enough for two people to sit comfortably side by side. When empty, it had a draught of a mere few inches and was light enough to be carried by four to six men if necessary. On the negative side, this vessel was not big enough to carry our party and all the equipment. I therefore asked the pasha if I might lease two barques with three capable boatmen for each. The price to be paid would be determined by experts.

Negotiations were held with the head of the boatmen's guild in the village of Shiroka on the other side of the Buna River and we agreed upon a price of 20 francs per day for each barque. In view of the fact that the boatmen were not familiar with the course of the river and were afraid of the highlanders through whose territory we would be passing, our friends in Shkodra told us that this price was by no means exorbitant.

The postal official of the consulate, Herr Kathereiner, who intended to accompany us to Prizren, arranged for our provisions, and the pasha provided us with two *kavasses* for the trip. Our only worry was, because of the current drought, whether we would have enough water in the channel of the new arm of the river to sail in a fully laden vessel. We were convinced that at least upstream in the mountains, where the river was undivided, we would have enough draught. On 30 August, the commander therefore made a reconnaissance trip in the new arm, up to its end, and when he brought back positive results, we set off the next day with our fifteen-man crew on two barques. We thus departed in good spirits in the direction of the mountains of Deja [Daino].

Like all the other towns I visited, Shkodra had remained unchanged over the last thirteen years, so in order to avoid repeating myself, I draw the reader's attention to the

description of it that I made in my *Albanian Studies*. Despite the lack of change and notable progress, I was delighted to see how the church had developed over this period. I noticed this time that the grand building of the Jesuit College was completed, the construction of which had been accompanied by years of struggle. Its foundations were once razed to the ground, as were its now opened school and seminary. The foundations of the large town church were also rising from the ground, such that it can be hoped that the large Catholic community in the capital city will no longer have to hold its services in the church cemetery, when the parishioners are forced to kneel on the snow-covered, frozen ground.

I must mention the fortunate coincidence of two meetings I had here because they were important for the journey and the description thereof. In Shkodra I had the pleasure of meeting the Archbishop of Antivari, Monsignor Carl Pooten<sup>2</sup> from Cologne, again, whom I had gotten to know thirteen years earlier. His influence on the project will be evident from the repeated reference to his name. No less important was a meeting with Monsignor Severini, the Bishop of Zadrima, who informed me, when he heard about my project, that I would definitely need to be accompanied by a clergyman. To my good fortune, he chose for me, from among his parish priests, Don Angelo Bardhi (in Italian Bianchi) to whom I am eternally grateful for the manner in which he carried out his tasks.

### Qerret

At Don Angelo's request, when we left Malç, we took on board with us four men to serve as boat hands. He spoke to them, saying, 'Come with us and help us, otherwise it will all be in vain.' The men immediately clambered into the barques. None of them requested time to fetch his coat or other necessities, and none of them asked those staying behind to inform their wives. Nor did any of those staying behind ask to be taken with us. The ease and light-heartedness with which Albanians make

decisions is one of their chief characteristics. They are men given to deeds, but no more than that. A consequence of their impetuous behaviour is that they change moods very quickly. I asked Don Angelo about this and he confirmed my perception of things entirely. He spoke in particular about the legendary touchiness of the Albanians and their violent tempers. He gave me several examples of young people who were good friends and who went out together, laughed and joked around, and then, all of a sudden, one of them would draw his pistol and shoot the other. This swift change of mood is something that can be encountered in predatory animals. I do not regard it as a positive characteristic of the Albanians, but rather as a sign of their low level of civilisation. This explains their erratic behaviour, something which has often been noticed about this people.

However, I was also offered ample proof here of a positive aspect of the Albanian character – their boundless hospitality. From Malç onwards, hardly an hour went by on the river that we were not called over to the bank to stop and were given gifts. These consisted mostly of grapes, figs and peaches, the latter being of excellent quality and without any doubt the best produce of this rocky land. But we were also given apples and pears, though of lesser quality than the peaches, and indeed brandy and a sort of pancake that the Greeks call *tiganites*. In some places we were veritably heaped with fruit. I remember one day that the twenty-one of us on board (seven travellers, six sailors, two *kavasses* and six natives) had so much fruit that lay in heaps in boxes on the boat that we could not manage to eat it all. None of the Albanians took any of it themselves, but only ate what I gave them or ordered to be given to them. When they took off their clothes to enter the water, they always excused themselves, saying there was no other way and I had hired them for the job, and when they got back into the boat naked, they covered themselves as best they could and turned their backs to us. There were no incivilities, and no inappropriate words or gestures.

### Karma

When we got past the village of Karma, we came across six natives on the riverbank whom Don Angelo had asked, via a messenger, to come. They explained that we would have no problem with the gorge, but that at its upper end there was a difficult stretch because there was no bank. They suggested that we all get out and use the mountain path that would take us to the top of the gorge in one and a half hours. There we should wait until the barques arrived. I could see the gorge, but I did not want to leave all of our things unattended. In addition to this, the crew stated that they would not proceed without one of us being present with them. As such, I remained on board and the others got out and took the said path. The tallest of our new native companions, pointing to my high boots, said to me: 'You are going to get wet even with your boots on.' I replied: 'Then I will ride piggyback on you.' The others laughed and I was happy to have established a good rapport with them, because I was the first Frank that these children of nature had ever seen, and they had no place for me on their social ladder (short as it may have been). The men all behaved properly. They answered my questions without delay and carried out all of my orders without any arguments.

### Komana

Just before we reached Komana, we went through the longest stretch of rapids we had experienced anywhere on the journey. According to Herr von Spaun, the difference in elevation was at least two feet for every 100 paces. The load on both barques had to be transported up to the start of the rapids on our men's backs and, although there was enough room for a path along the bank and the local villagers helped us willingly, the whole operation was laborious and took quite some time. It would have been insane to carry all of this luggage over the mountains where the difficulties would have been much greater. As such, I had no

other choice but to divide our party into two. Dr Székely, Herr Kathereiner, one crewman and a *kavass* would have to return to Shkodra on one of the barques with all the photographic equipment and larger luggage, and indeed they arrived in Shkodra the same day, just before sunset. I was to continue our journey upriver with Herr von Spaun, Don Angelo, two crewmen and a *kavass*. Dr Székely made his way from Shkodra to Prizren overland and waited for us there.

As will later be shown, I was delighted to have taken this decision, although it was somewhat late. We had planned to set a day aside in Komana to gather information about the Dukagjini region. Unfortunately our time was used up in finding out how to get through the gorge to the north of Komana. We had made any decision about dividing the party up dependent on what we discovered.

Komana is the most westerly of the twelve *bajraks* which make up what is actually Dukagjini. It stretches from the Drin for about three hours in a southwardly direction to the north-eastern foot of the high mountains of Puka. Upper Qerret, through which the road from Shkodra to Prizren runs, belongs to this *bajrak*. This road is more or less considered here to be the boundary between Dukagjini and Mirdita territory, although the actual boundary often deviates from the road. The bed of the Drin River constitutes the northern boundary of Dukagjini. I suspect that this word means nothing other than Duka, son of Gjin, just as I would translate the place name Koladjin [Kolašin] as Nicholas, son of John. This accords with the custom of the natives to use the word Dukagjini not only for the region but also as a family name, which they apply in particular to their national hero. We will later discuss a castle and a legend about him. When the highlanders to the north of the Drin say: 'We live by the *kanun* of Dukagjini', they do not mean that they live by the law of the region of Dukagjini, but by the rules and regulations handed down to them by Dukagjini. Equally, the people of Mat and Dibra say: 'We live by the law of Scanderbeg (*kanuni Skanderbegut*).'

### Toplana

It was here that we came across the first naked children, who go unclothed all winter, too. Only the men had shirts on. The women wore their originally white, and now sallow brownish woollen dresses right over their bodies. Grisebach states of these people, in the style of Tacitus, 'No man of Dukagjini owns a shirt, but all of them have rifles.' This is true not only for the people of Dukagjini, but for all of their northern neighbours, too. In the northern mountains, however, shirts have apparently started making inroads in recent times, together with the red fez.

We slept in the new unroofed house reserved for our host's younger brother. It was different from the usual construction of thin oak beams, one upon the other, that are mortised at the corners and reminded one of the type of houses used by Russian peasants. Normally, the houses in Dukagjini are one-storey constructions of stone. The roofs are usually made of stone slabs that are weighed down with heavier stones here and there to protect against the wind.

### Mërturi

When we reached our camp for the night, I paid the boatmen their wages. They departed immediately for their boats, running more than walking, and pushed off right away. Don Angelo saw them swirling down the river and was so concerned about our safety that he refused to budge from our belongings and sent several messengers off. It was only when he received a positive response that he returned to the village with the pack horses, and later came a considerable way back down the mountain to meet us. I was not in the best of moods when we met because the mountain we had to climb in the oppressive noonday heat was extremely steep. I was still under the shock of having had to abandon the great enterprise that I had planned and thought through for years. I had rarely been as despondent



as I was on our way to Mërturi, although I had plenty of time to accustom myself to what had now occurred. When one's feelings are hurt, there is no sense appealing to reason.

The settlement was located at an elevation of 1,875 feet on a barren and rocky mountain ridge, facing southwards. The northern side fell abruptly down towards the Drin. There we came across two whitewashed towers, three or four storeys high, with parapets on the top. These belonged to the two chiefs. However, it proved to be quite some time before we reached the building chosen as our accommodation for the night. The owner of the first house we approached came to the door and invited us in. Don Angelo said we could not reject his invitation without humiliating him in front of all the people who had assembled to attend the consecration of the church. We went in, but only into the courtyard because it was too hot in the interior of the house itself. I must admit that it was here that I made my first acquaintance with Albanian brandy. I had often heard that the Albanians loved to drink their brandy and could not understand this. But when I was given a glass half full of the stuff, and drank it to the last drop because I was thirsty, I discovered that this highland schnapps was actually no stronger than the average Cypriot wine. We had to consume the same amount of brandy at the next two houses where we stopped on our way to our tower, but it was not so overpowering as to cause us to refuse further hospitality of this sort.

We arrived, as stated, on the day when they were consecrating the church and were expecting much celebration, shooting in the air, dancing, singing and music, but aside from the occasional gunshot there was no hint of festivity, even though all the guests had come over to our part of the village to have a look at the recently arrived 'Franks'. Whenever we entered a courtyard, the people would gather around us in a circle, very much like a swarm of bees because they were all talking at the same time. Yet there was no pushing and shoving, and no particular excitement was to be seen. There were no shouts, no cries, no laughing, nothing but the constant buzz of

the crowd. Young and old, men and women all stood around and stared at us.

With regard to folk customs, my observations led me to the conclusion that the inhabitants of Dukagjini are not fond of singing and dancing, which made me seriously doubt that they were the true descendants of the ancient Dardanians, whose proclivity for song and dance was noted by Strabo. A further reservation in this connection is that the people of Dukagjini do not live in underground homes covered by manure, as this geographer mentioned at the time. The Vlach farmers to the north of the Danube, on the other hand, still build their homes underground and visitors can easily mistake their roofs for piles of manure, and can be standing in the middle of a Vlach village without even knowing it.

Don Angelo and other natives, however, assured me that there was no other people more devoted to song and dance, that they would sing and dance for days and nights on end, to the neglect of their work. They even sang while working and it was just a coincidence that I had not noticed this. What was most typical of the people of Dukagjini and the Albanians in general, more than of all the other peoples of the peninsula – aside from their irritability and hospitality – was their great love of song and dance and of entertaining guests. They always preferred to have fun than to work.

The ancient Dardanians thus did have something in common with these people. Particularly interesting was another remark made by Don Angelo: 'The Albanians regard it as a grave sin to turn away someone seeking shelter for the night. They always take the guest in and give him whatever they have, as best they can. Should the guest be murdered or ill-treated the next day before finding shelter for the following night, a blood feud arises. A *banxhi* (innkeeper) in whose establishment a murder takes place must close the place down and cannot show his face in public until he has shot the murderer. There are people who wander around from home to home making use of hospitality professionally and stay with

their hosts until the food runs out. The host then takes his rifle and accompanies the guest to the next place where the two of them are welcomed as guests.' I do not wish to draw any particular parallels between the ancient Germans and the people of Dukagjini, but these customs are very similar. What struck me most was that Don Angelo reported on the situation in the very manner of Tacitus, and I have no doubt that Tacitus got his information directly from the people when he wrote about hosts becoming guests.

### Fierza

We were unable to acquire more than three mules to continue our journey if we did not wish to lose much time. I wanted to get away from Mërturi and see new horizons in order to put behind me the depressing reminders of the failure of my mission to voyage all the way up the Drin River by boat. These thoughts still weighed heavily upon me. We thus decided to carry on along the river on foot to reach the main trail from Shkodra to Prizren. We were told that fourteen hours would be needed for this journey up the Drin: seven hours from Mërturi to the Catholic parish of Fierza and another seven hours from there to the inn of Spaç (Hani i Spaçit) where the trail reached the banks of the Drin.

The young Muslim leased us his mule to Spaç. He was the grandson of the one-time hereditary Derven Aga of Iballja who ruled over all of Dukagjini and whose name was Sulejman Bey. The young man was a kind lad by nature and did not make a fuss about his ancestry. His clothing and behaviour were no different from the others who, nonetheless, paid him a certain degree of respect. As with all warrior nations, the Albanians have something indefinably aristocratic in their manners and way of thinking, an element of character which is quite lacking among the Vlachs and Bulgarians. Among the Greeks, one finds it only in the warrior tribes.

### Nikaj

Later on, we reached the valley of Nikaj that stretches from north to south, ending at the Drin. The stream thus flows down this valley into the Drin. On my map, I placed this stream approximately where the Leshnica River flows into the Drin on Kiepert's map.<sup>3</sup> The inhabitants of this region are considered ever-ready for a fight, more so than the other highlanders.

We had lunch at the *kulla* of the chieftain of Apripa. He was only six years old and his father had died two years earlier. His older brother was looking after affairs until the boy reached age. However, we did not actually get to see him and were told that he was ailing. I suspected rather that he was fearful of the 'evil eye' that we might have cast upon him. In the afternoon we crossed the 'no man's land' from Mërturi with only three men accompanying us. From that point on, we were under the protection of ten men from Apripa. On our way, we passed many wooden crosses. I thought they were memorials to men who had been killed, but was told that it was simply customary among the Christians in this region to place crosses at particular resting spots along the way. As to their size, they resembled graves more than trail crosses like those we have in our country. Such symbols of Christian piety are, of course, a thorn in the flesh of the Muslim *trims* [heroes, rowdies], who use them for target practice or destroy them if they can get away with it unnoticed. The Christians naturally take revenge on the perpetrators if they catch them.

On the other side of the no man's land, Don Angelo pointed out a landslide consisting of scree and grey boulders that fell sharply towards the Drin. It formed part of the trail between Raja and Apripa. No traveller could get across it without being pelted with stones by the *zanas* [highland fairies]. Most of the stones miss them but some can cause serious injuries. For this reason, no Christian traverses the slide without first making the sign of the cross. Don Angelo was always pelted with stones when he passed by here, which was quite often when he was

living in Fierza. These *zanas* are mountain spirits who live here and in many other places in the highlands. Their name means 'voices' because they sing and dance beautifully. They are like Albanian elves, but are only known under this name here. I endeavoured here and elsewhere to find out more about these spirits to add to the material given in my *Albanian Studies*, but without success. All I heard about them were brief indications of things I already knew. While inquiring, I found out about other spirits called *djems* (demons) who were able to take any form they wanted when they appeared before people. They could even appear as Christ on the cross, 'but they cannot conceal the little ram's horns that they have behind their ears. If you know this, you can recognise them right away.'

### Prizren

We hastened up the valley of the White Drin because we needed another six hours (Turkish time) to get to Prizren. We were relieved by the shade of the thick-growing leafy trees that protected us from the sun almost the whole time. Grisebach provides an excellent description of the valley, and those who are curious would do well to read it because the landscape does not offer much else of particular interest. One and a half hours before Prizren, the path turned eastwards, away from the river. We reached two fine villages with well-built houses, and thereafter, some well-fortified gendarmerie barracks. Having crossed several hillocks on an arid gravelly plain, we finally caught sight of the large city of Prizren that is located at the southern end of a long plateau stretching for six hours. The mountain range at the northern end of this plain was barely visible in the heavy evening air. However, the city and the fortress above it glowed before us in shades of purple and gold in the setting sun. Alas, we were unable to enjoy the scene for long because a long column of horsemen was advancing swiftly in our direction to meet and welcome us. It included the

authorities and all the notables of the town, with all their religious groups and languages.

At the head of the column was our venerable consular agent, Dr von Petelenz, a native of Hungary, who had lived in Prizren for a number of years. The length of the procession behind him was eminent proof of the manner in which he represented the interests of the Austro-Hungarian Empire here. There were 150 cavalymen and, in their midst, we were delighted to see Dr Székely in fine spirits.

I am extremely grateful to Herr von Petelenz for the kind hospitality he showed while we were staying with him and for the excellent information he provided about Prizren, which I reproduce here. Readers may be acquainted with the name of this city on maps, but most of them will be surprised, as was the present author, to learn that it is the largest town in Albania and indeed one of the largest cities in the Balkan Peninsula. Setting Larissa and Janina apart, we find that the population of Prizren is greater than that of Shkodra and most probably than that of Monastir [Bitola].

According to official statistics, Prizren has 11,540 houses, of which 8,400 are Muslim, 3,000 are Greek Orthodox and 150 are Catholic. These houses contain a total of 46,000 inhabitants, of whom 36,000 are Muslim, 8,000 are Greek Orthodox (Bulgarians and Vlachs), and 2,000 are Catholics. The population is increasing rapidly, which makes the town all the more suitable as a capital city.

The area around Prizren is extremely fertile and produces not only various types of grain, but also much wine of good quality and much livestock. It is estimated that the 200 villages on the plain own 5,200 oxen and 100,000 sheep and goats.

The district of Prizren pays the following taxes:

600,000 piastres as grain tithe,  
400,000 piastres as livestock tax,  
1,200,000 piastres as *vergi*,  
50,000 piastres as stamp tax.

Trade and commerce are entirely in the hands of the Christians. The bad condition of the road to Shkodra has meant that Prizren imports great quantities of English goods from Salonica. Of greatest importance among the skilled workers are tanners, gunsmiths and armourers. Most of the Moroccan leather produced here is exported to Hungary.

### Radomir

We realised how difficult it was to find people in Prizren who knew anything about the valley of the Black Drin when we asked around for information. It took quite some time before we managed to find two Vlach potters who knew the region at least down to the border of Dibra because they had travelled up and down the valley on numerous occasions selling their wares. I asked these two brothers to give me the names of the villages on the Black Drin, one after the other, and the distances between them, but when I calculated the total, it was much more than I had imagined. I then took out the Kiepert map and asked them about each of the villages mentioned on it. The men had heard of none of them, so I then took out a Turkish map which had different place names on it. The same thing happened. It contained none of the place names known by the potters, and the potters knew none of the place names on the Turkish map. Who was right? With a good deal of consternation I heard that Radomir and the fortress of Doda (Kalaja e Dodës) were located four hours east of the Drin. On my first trip I had heard that the fortress was on a remote cliff at the foot of Mount Korab and was the seat of Dervish Aga, who was the bravest and most violent man in the whole region. I had also been told that there were numerous ruins of old churches and large buildings in that area. I had therefore intended to pay Has Begu a visit in his fortress. However, when I asked the potters about the cliff, the battlements and the drawbridges of the fortress of Doda, they shook their heads and stated that, although they had never been there themselves,

they had never heard of such an old fortress. Nonetheless, I did not allow their doubts to influence my travel plans, in particular because the road up the Drin was said to part from the river quite often to circumvent its meanderings and to avoid steep climbs. I expected that our trail to Radomir would lead us into the high mountains.

We left Prizren on the afternoon of 17 September [1863] with twelve horses and two mounted gendarmes who were to be given reinforcements at the guard posts along the way if needed. It was dark before we reached the inn where we planned to stay for the night. We lost our way and wasted a good deal of time before we managed to get out of the maize stubble and obligatory ditches of the marshy terrain through which we were erring. Such fields of stubble are torture for the poor horses and their riders [...]

We rode for another two hours until we reached the scattered settlement of Bicaj where we were given an empty, two-storey house to spend the night. The villagers behaved properly to us, but were taciturn and reserved, in particular when I asked them for information about the surrounding region. I had more difficulty with the natives here because they all spoke the Dibra dialect of Albanian, which is not easy. I did not have an interpreter with me and was left to my own devices. I found myself in the situation of a German who had received theoretical instruction in French many years earlier and was now forced to converse with French farmers who spoke only *patois*. When they spoke among themselves, I was rarely able to follow the conversation.

We had forgotten to take sugar with us from Prizren and were resigned to the fact that we would only be able to get a supply of it in Dibra. To my amazement, however, the shopkeeper in Bicaj sold sugar and at a reasonable price. In the smaller villages, the people were more cunning and demanded double the price for everything they had to offer. In general, all the prices in this area were much higher than we had anticipated for such isolated regions. Life was cheaper in Ohrid and Monastir than on the Drin.



I was surprised to find the fustanella as the usual costume worn by men in Bicaj. We had encountered it at the church consecration in Mërturi and sporadically along the Drin up to Prizren, but here it was normal dress.

### Lura

I had always regarded the Lura tribe, the only Catholics in the region of the Black Drin River, as vassals of the chief of Mirdita who lived only six hours away from them. Surrounded as they are by Muslims, it is only to the west that they have contact with a Catholic area, the district of Orosh, and it would thus seem a political necessity, given their vulnerability, that they seek support from their powerful neighbours against the common foe. But this was not the case. When I was in the region, I heard that the Lura and Orosh tribes were in constant conflict over their common border. I therefore broached the subject with the parish priest and received the following information from him. The border of Lura traditionally stretched to the Camadolese<sup>4</sup> monastery of Saint John (Shën Gjini), the ruins of which are located one and a half Turkish miles east of Varosh. At its zenith, this monastery owned not only the large southern pass but also the smaller eastern pass to the narrow valley of Orosh. The trail to Lura leads over the latter.

In front of this monastery stood, and stands to this very day, a huge tree that marks the border between the territory of Orosh and that of Lura. This tree was decorated every year at the Feast of Saint John with the banner of Lura, and the parish priest of Orosh came over to hold mass here. Many people from the area attended this feast, both Christians and Muslims, and a fair was held that was of some importance. Such was the tradition until 1830. Then, the Orosh tribe laid exclusive claim to all of the west side of the Buza e Malit mountain, and would only allow the Lura tribe to let their animals graze up to the pass. The result was war and much loss of blood. Even more damage was done to the herds on both sides, because every time

one side grew in strength, they stole all the flocks of the other side that were found grazing in this disputed area.

Finally, however, the Lura tribe, as the weaker, was forced to give way, and the border was fixed on the pass of Buza e Malit mountain, as Orosh had wanted. Although peace has been restored, there is still much ill will among the two sides, and marriages between them are as rare as between Christians and Muslims, although both sides acquire their women only from outside the tribe.

According to what the prefect told me, the Christian population of Lura is now on the decline. The situation is as follows. Lura was once entirely Catholic. In the parish register for 1757, mention is made of 124 households and 1,001 souls. From then on began the gradual process of conversion to Islam. The following tale is told about the reasons behind this. The Muslims of the neighbouring settlement of Çidhna once murdered the parish priest of Lura, Pater Gervasius, who held the office of an apostolic prefect. To avenge the death of their priest, the men of Lura slew fourteen Muslims and, when Osman, the pasha of Prizren, heard of this deed, he banned the Lura tribe under threat of death from visiting Prizren market and all the other markets in the region. In addition, no priest had been found to take up the parish of Lura, which remained unoccupied for fifteen years. The decline of Catholicism dates from this period, such that there are now only twenty-three Catholic households in Lura as opposed to ninety Muslim households. Even today, missionaries are unable to prevent apostasy or mixed marriages between Muslims and Catholics. It is, however, very rare for a Catholic man to marry a Muslim woman. It is almost always the reverse, although the women are not usually forced to convert to the religion of their husbands.

### Dibra

On the following day, we rode down the valley of the Veleshica [Veleshesa] that forms the boundary between Luma and Dibra,

and reached the first village of Dibra, called Slatina, that is situated on the eastern side of the broad vale of Dibra. [...] The further we progressed, the more fertile and inhabited the region became. It looked quite well-to-do and the landscape had something friendlier about it. We soon reached two villages next to one another, Sohodol and Borovjan, the centres of which reminded one of real towns, with rows of tall, two-storey houses with whitewashed walls, and cobblestone roads with wide gutters in the middle for the pack animals. There were shops and even a little butcher's table with skinned goats hanging from it. All around, there were fine vineyards extending to the foot of the slopes to the east. Above these there were pastures right up to the mountain peaks, a rarity in Albania. The grape pickers were out and about, but the main vintage was already over. Two of them brought us some grapes and both refused the money we offered them in exchange. The last stretch of the trail to the house of Has Beg led us past three watermills along a stream of trees and bushes. It was all very pleasing to the eye. Brezhdan, the home of Has Beg, is located near the Drin. His stately manor is surrounded by high walls. Turkish manors usually consist of a three-storey façade with the two ends forming pavilions. The space in the courtyard between the pavilions is taken up by galleries open to the courtyard, to which all doors lead. It is here that one finds the main concourse of activity in the manor. The hired labourers and servants spend their time here, as does the noble family itself, when the weather is good. A roofed wooden staircase leads to these pavilions. The rooms on the main floor serve as stables and as storerooms for wood and coal. The second floor had quite low rooms used for the kitchen, pantries and the servants' quarters. The top floor was reserved as accommodation for the family itself. The difference between oriental and Western manors is that the rooms in the former are not isolated and are not designed to be kept apart. Rooms reserved exclusively for the family members are something quite unknown, as is a distinction between living,

eating, working and sleeping quarters. No one seems to have any need to withdraw from the activities of the household as a whole. People in the Orient live together as they would in a tent and, for this reason, all the doors are kept open. To protect the rooms from the cold air outside, the doors are hung with thick carpets. To enter a room one raises the carpet, like a curtain, in one corner and lets it fall when one passes. If a foreign visitor closes the door to his room, everyone in the house wonders what brought him to do such a strange thing. The harem is constructed similarly to the men's quarters (i.e. the *selamlık* and guest rooms). Should there be several women of equal rank, each of them has her own bedroom, but life is largely spent in common. Should a dispute break out among them, it is hard to find peace and quiet because the women cannot get away from one another. Polygamy is, however, extremely rare in European Turkey. The men, both of the upper class and of the lower orders, are satisfied, as in the West, with one official wife. Nonetheless, it must be noted that intimate relations between the lord and the female servants of the harem, be they slaves or wives, are by no means as pure as they usually are in our country. [...]

We were greeted by the sixteen-year-old eldest son of Has Beg who possessed upper-class Turkish etiquette, and were quite surprised to find such customs observed among the young people of Dibra. On the other hand, we were unable to overcome the shyness of the younger twelve-year-old brother who refused to enter the guestrooms of the *selamlık* despite our repeated requests.

We conversed as best we could with the young bey. He told us that he loved hunting more than anything else and devoted all of his time to this sport, whenever he could get away from his studies. He showed us his rifle, his dogs and his little goshawk that was hardly a span high, yet that could hunt quail and rock partridges. He then called for his falconer who understood Greek. A little old grey man with flushed cheeks appeared before us. He was quite infantile in his behaviour as he

sat on the sofa beside us, picking at himself as if he were so obsessed with hunting that he could not stop, and ignored the repeated scolding of the young lord.

The hodja or house-tutor arrived back from town in the evening, and proved to be just as old and weather-beaten as the falconer. He seemed to run the household in the absence of Has Beg. The lads went out into the courtyard to greet him and treated him with great respect.

On the following morning (21 September), we returned along the way we had come the evening before, in order to meet the *mudir*, a frail old man from Shumla, who, despite having spent a year and a half in Dibra, had not managed to learn a word of Albanian, even though he had married a young woman from Dibra who did not know a word of Turkish.<sup>5</sup>



## PART II

# ORAL LITERATURE AND ETHNOGRAPHIC WRITINGS

*Johann Georg von Hahn had a keen interest in Albanian folk tales, legends and customs and included a good amount of such material in his publications. The legends of the founding of the northern Albanian tribes of Kelmendi, Triepshi, Hoti and Kastrati given below derive from his book Albanian Studies. In addition to the material gathered during his Albanian travels, in the winter of 1862–3, Hahn finished a collection of ‘Greek and Albanian Folk Tales’ which he published in book form in Leipzig in 1864. The four Albanian folk tales given here were recorded in 1862 on the Aegean island of Poros, which was Albanian-speaking at that time. Hahn was also among the first foreign scholars to collect and record Albanian folk songs and oral literature. Among this material, published in Albanian Studies, is a lengthy account, quite surprising for the period, of ‘pederasty in central and northern Albania’ and, in relation to this, a collection of love songs in the oriental tradition gathered in about 1850.*





# LEGEND OF THE FOUNDING OF THE KELMENDI TRIBE

Many years ago, there was a rich herdsman in the region of Triepshi. A young man of unknown origin, called Klement, came by and was employed by the herdsman to take care of his sheep. This the shepherd did together with the herdsman's daughter who was called Bubci. She was lame and had thus not been able to find a husband. With time, their friendship developed into a love affair and the maiden became pregnant. When the girl's mother found out what had happened, she used all the means at her disposal to persuade her rough and heartless husband not to punish the young couple but to allow them to live together. According to custom, he had the right to put them to death. In the end, she succeeded and Klement and Bubci became man and wife. They were given twenty head of livestock and were sent to another mountain region where they were to settle because the old man could not get over the shame on his family caused by their affair.

The mountain area that the new couple received and where they settled was called Bestana. Even today one can see the remains of a small church, a few houses and some overgrown grapevines. It is said that the place had to be abandoned because of the great number of vipers that still exist there. Bestana is situated about four hours from the villages of Selca and Vukël.

The land in that area, as the home of their ancestral father, was never apportioned to any tribe members and thus belongs to all of the Kelmendi tribe.

With Bubci, Klement had seven sons. With time, they became the ancestral fathers of the seven largest families that founded the villages of Selca, Vukël, Nikç, Vuthaj [Vusanje] and Martinaj [Martinovići], whence the Kelmendi of Bukova in Dukagjin and of Llap in the mountains of Kosovo stem.

The eldest son was called Kola and was the head of the village of Selca. He had three sons: Vui Kola, Mai Kola and Rabin Kola. The three families that descended from these men formed the population of Selca that now has 350 households and 1,600 souls.

The second son was called Vuco. He had only one son called Deda (which is the equivalent of Italian Domenico). Deda, in turn, had three sons: Uhsai Deda, Giz Deda and Zek (i.e. Joseph) Deda, whose families now make up the village of Vukël that, together with the earlier inhabitants, has 170 households and 1,300 souls. The earlier inhabitants are the last remaining representatives of the original population of the region who, according to legend, were mostly driven out by the Kelmendi. They formed the Gimaj, Pepusaj and Xhireaj families. The Albanians call them the Anes (from Albanian *anë*: 'side, edge'), i.e. people who were outside of the ruling tribe.

The third son was called Nika. He had several sons, among whom were Del Nika, Bala Nika and Vuth [Untha] Nika. Del Nika and his descendants founded the village of Nikç that now has 75 households and 500 souls. The two other brothers, Bala and Untha, left Del. They took over the pass between the Prokletije and Plava mountains and built the village of Vuthaj [Unthaj] that is situated half an hour south of the town of Gucia [Gusinje] and six hours north of Selca and now has 70 households and 500 souls.

The other sons of the ancestral father Klement were also blessed with many children so that the tribe flourished rapidly and counted many valiant men. Since the Albanian race is

inclined, by nature, to warfare and blood-feuding, the Kelmendi were never satisfied with their lives as simple shepherds, but rather indulged in robbery whenever they had the chance. As the strength of their tribe grew, they extended their attacks more and more into neighbouring territories and even managed to force the region between Gucia, Pešter [Pester] and Peja [Pekia] into submission. These raids and conquests meant that the Kelmendi were constantly involved in warfare with the Ottomans. Three major wars are recorded by tradition: one with Shkodra, one with Podgorica and one with Peja. The first one is said to have lasted ten years, and in one sole confrontation, no less than 10,000 Turks lost their lives. During this war, the Kelmendi withdrew to a natural fortress called Samo Gradi, which was also known as the 'Fortress of Kelmendi' (*forcë e Kelmendit*). It is a small plateau in the Prokletije mountain range, about half an hour in circumference. It is surrounded on all sides by unassailable cliffs and has only one entrance that is extremely difficult to approach and easy to defend. In the midst of the fortress there is a spring of ice-cold water that never goes dry. On the southern side is a large cave that serves to house the women, children and the few domestic animals they take with them. Since they were often besieged in this refuge by their foes, they suffered much, including periods of starvation when they were often forced to eat the bark of the trees. When the sieges subsided or when they succeeded in outwitting or getting around the enemy positions, the highlanders took revenge in gruesome attacks in the surroundings and always managed to return with food and booty.

The second war was with Podgorica and lasted seven years. It was no less brutal than the first one because the suffering that the Kelmendi went through in this war was so great that, in seven years, only three boys were born in the village of Selca and they turned out to be weak and sickly.

In the third war against the Pasha of Peja, the Kelmendi were initially lucky and managed to block the Turks in the

fortress of Gucia. At that time they made use of portable shield-like baskets that they filled with wool and held in front of them as they advanced over the plain. These baskets protected them from the view of enemy artillery and enabled them to reach the besieged Turks with their long rifles, and wreak great destruction.

They were so sure of victory that the chiefs of the various families began to divide up the enemy territory among themselves. However, a dispute arose during their discussions with regard to certain pasturelands and one of the leaders called Chiobala became so bitter in his unsuccessful endeavour to stake a claim that he betrayed his tribe. During the night, he made contact with the Turks and, in exchange for a promise to be given the pastureland in question, revealed a means by which the Turks could overcome the advance of Kelmendi forces. The Turks followed his advice and, that same night, planted a lot of small stakes in the ground where the Kelmendi usually attacked with their baskets. The next morning, when the Kelmendi realised that they were unable to move their protective baskets freely because of the stakes, they panicked, took flight into their mountains and were pursued by the besieged Turks. From that time on, the war took a bad turn for the Kelmendi and most of them were subsequently forced to emigrate. They had probably become too numerous to survive in the arid mountain regions they inhabited anyway.

It is from the time of this war that we can date the emigration of the Kelmendi to Rugova above Peja, to the mountains of Llap-Gollak [Lab-Gulap] in Kosovo, to Selca (Slavic Seoca) on the eastern bank of Lake Shkodra, to the border of Montenegro, and finally to Syrmia where, under the name of Clementines, they still inhabit the villages of Ninkinci and Hrtkovci.

Of those who remained on their tribal land, two colonies later emerged. One settled south of the valley of Kelmendi between the Prokletije and Biskachi mountains and built the village of Boga that now has 40 households and about 400 souls

and a banner [*bajrak*] of its own. The other colony went north and built the village of Martinaj on the eastern bank of the Lim River, half an hour from the place where it flows into Lake Plava. The inhabitants of this village converted to Islam, as did their neighbours and fellow tribesmen from the above-mentioned village of Vuthaj.<sup>1</sup>



# LEGEND OF THE FOUNDING OF THE HOTI AND TRIEPSHI TRIBES

The ancestral tribal leader of Hoti and Triepshi was called Keki. It is not known where he came from but, like Klement of Kelmendi, he must have been an Albanian because his descendants spoke Albanian and were Catholic. According to legend, because he was being pursued by the Turks, he fled to a Slavic region now called Piperi that belongs to the Brda [highlands] of Montenegro. There, he had six sons: Lazar Keki, Ban Keki, Merkota Keki, Kaster Keki, Vas Keki and Piper Keki. When they were growing up, they killed one of the natives of the village and, according to local custom, the whole family was obliged to flee. Father Keki, however, realised that he was too old to leave, and that his youngest son, Piper, was too young and weak (he limped on one leg) to follow his brothers into exile. He therefore endeavoured to pacify the family of the dead man and begged for permission to remain in the country in view of his and his son's precarious situation. He received permission, which is rarely denied under such circumstances, and thus remained in the village with Piper. The large clan of Piperi that now has 200 households and 1,500 Orthodox, Slavic-speaking members, stems from this lad Piper.

They are in constant conflict with the neighbouring Muslim towns of Spuž and Podgorica.

The other five brothers settled in Triepshi, which is situated on the northern bank of the Cem River (a western tributary of the Morača), an hour to the east of Gruda and Fundina. Merkota Keqi soon found life in this stony region too hard so he settled on the plain of Podgorica, two hours to the west of the town, because he preferred to make his living in a fertile area rather than to wander freely and independently in the mountains. His descendants gave the village that they had founded the name Mrkovići [Merkotaj], after their ancestral father. It now has 70 households and over 500 souls. They are followers of the Orthodox church and speak Slavic.

The other four sons of Keqi remained for a while in Triepshi. However, there came a time of great hardship for the region and grain could only be procured on the fertile plains and in the valley of the White Drin far to the east. The two youngest brothers, who were unmarried, therefore set off for the town of Peja to buy grain for their families. At the inn where they were staying, they met two fair maidens who had come to Peja for the same reason. The maidens took a fancy to the slender lads and asked them who they were and where they came from. The young men told them the sad tale of their family, that they were poor shepherds treated badly by fate. The maidens replied that they were, each of them, the only daughters of rich parents and, if the young men would marry them, they would inherit substantial fortunes. They also told them that there was enough fertile land where they came from to feed the two brothers. The young men raised the objection that their older brothers would not go with them and that they could not leave their elderly father alone. They did not live with him, but were not so far away that they could not visit him from time to time. After much discussion, the four young people agreed to meet at a later date in the same inn to exchange information about what they had achieved. Each then went his own way. When the two young men got home, they told their brothers what had



happened and asked for their advice. The brothers advised them not to leave because this would weaken the position of the family, and others would be able to insult them and go unpunished. They feared they would never see one another again if they were to live so far away. These objections convinced the two young brothers for quite a while but, in the end, love won out, as did the realisation that their descendants would live in eternal poverty if they remained in Triepshi. They thus decided to leave home and thereby divide the family. They invited old Keqi, their brother Merkota who had settled near Podgorica and the lame Piper to Triepshi for a feast and, when they had all eaten their fill, the two young men took leave of the remaining clan and set off for Peja. They met the two maidens there on the appointed day and followed them to their homes.

One of these maidens was from Redzica. She married the young Vas Keqi, and from their union stemmed the large Vasojevići [Vasevich] tribe that now counts 200 households and 3,000 souls. The Vasojevići follow the Orthodox church and speak Slavic. They are known as inveterate robbers and carry out raids on the neighbouring territories as often as they can. They also ambush Muslim caravans from Gucia [Gusinje], Bijelo Polje and Rožaje. They can be divided into two groups: the upper Vasojevići and the lower Vasojevići, depending on whether they live on the eastern or the western side of the mountain range that serves as the divide between the waters that flow into the Mediterranean and those that flow into the Danube basin, as well as the divide between the northwards-flowing Lim and the Morača that flows southwards into Lake Shkodra. The upper Vasojevići inhabit the valley of the Redzica that comes down from the eastern slopes of those mountains and ends at the Lim. The lower Vasojevići inhabit the mountains between the Morača to the west, the Mala Rijeka [Malo Rika] Creek to the north and the wooded Lijevo Rijeka [Lievo Rika] River to the south. It is because of this latter name that they are also called Lijevo Rijekjani. The region of Lijevo Rijeka was long uninhabited but during the Turkish conquest,

most of the inhabitants of Redzica withdrew to the other side of the mountains and this region was thereby settled. Those who remained in Redzica became tenant farmers of the Turks. When things settled down, many of the refugees returned in small groups and there are now forty to fifty households of Lijeva Rijeka in Redzica. On the other side, as mentioned, the descendants of Vas who had emigrated there continued to harass their Muslim neighbours and many of them had to flee. They crossed over the mountains and settled in Lijeva Rijeka. As such, one now finds the original inhabitants mixed in with the later immigrants on both sides of the mountains. However, both parts call themselves Vasojevići.

Turkish rule over the valley of the Redzica was never particularly strong. In times of trouble or whenever the opportunity arose, the inhabitants refused to pay taxes or tribute. Whenever the Turks gained the upper hand, the residents once again declared their submission. The Turks usually found it to their advantage to accept such declarations and forget the past. The Lijevo Rijekjani living on the western side of the mountains, whose district normally forms part of the Montenegrin Brda, have, however, never recognised Turkish rule. Both tribes are now (1850) led by a monk, the Archimandrite Moses, who is said to be an intelligent and cosmopolitan man and who resides at the Monastery of Saint George. This monastery is situated in the valley of the Redzica, about five hours from Bijelo Polje, in a settlement called Hasi.

The other maiden stemmed from a region of Dukagjin between the Drin and Valbona rivers, not far from Gjakova [Jakovo]. She married Kaster Keqi and from their union arose the clan of the Kastravich who speak Albanian and who have mostly converted to Islam.

We now return to the two sons of old Keqi who remained in Triepshi. These were Lazar Keqi and Ban Keqi. Their families and herds prospered to such an extent that the small region they owned was insufficient to sustain them and they could no longer remain together.

Lazar decided to move southwards to the neighbouring region of Hoti, on the other side of the Cem River. They agreed that the river was to be considered the border for the herds of the two brothers. However, something odd happened during the separation that was to become a source of much strife and conflict among their descendants. When Lazar departed with all of his goods, it so happened that on one of the horses he took with him as his property, a saddle remained that belonged to Ban. Lazar was already riding up the southern slope of the river valley when his brother called to him from the northern side to return the saddle. The thought of having to ride all the way back down the mountain and up the other side was too much for Lazar and he called back to his brother saying that, in exchange for the saddle, he would give him the southern side of the valley, that is, the slope he had just ridden up and that was supposed to belong to him. As such, the Triepshi own this slope – that is to say, they own the whole Cem valley even today.

The Hoti continued to fight over ownership of the land with their northern neighbours, with many open confrontations. In 1849, for instance, the two tribes battled twice for possession of the land. In the first battle, the Hoti suffered two dead and five wounded, and the Triepshi two dead and three wounded, although the Hoti had over 400 warriors and the Triepshi only eighty. In the second battle, the Hoti suffered four dead and many wounded, and the Triepshi only one dead and four wounded. But in one battle that was fought many years ago, twenty Hoti and only seven Triepshi fell. The Triepshi attribute their constant military advantage to the fact that they are always on the defensive and lie in protected positions on the northern slope as they await their numerically superior foes. In an attempt to put an end to the eternal conflict, the Hoti offered the Triepshi a golden saddle to replace the saddle of their ancestral father, but the Triepshi have always refused.

From Ban Keqi stemmed the four large Catholic Albanian clans of Triepshi that now make up over seventy families and, together with the original inhabitants of the place, constitute

the village of Triepshi that counts 115 households and about 700 souls. The original inhabitants are also Catholic and speak Albanian. Triepshi is a geographically secure site, and its inhabitants are very warlike by nature. They are thus in constant conflict not only with their immediate neighbours but also with the distant Muslim towns of Podgorica and Gucia which they perturb with their frequent incursions. They lie in ambush to attack caravans and kill as many Muslims as they can manage to find.

Lazar Keqi, who had crossed the Cem River, originally took tenure of land from a rich Hoti man. His family grew to such an extent that they were able to oppose the natives in the region and gradually made themselves masters of this arid land. The original inhabitants either emigrated or were driven out such that, in the end, there were only six households of natives and they were in a wretched state.

Of Lazar Keqi's son, Geg Lazari, stems the great clan of the Hoti Gegas. He had four sons: Pjec Gega, Gjon Gega, Laj Gega and Gjuni [Jun] Gega.

From Pjec Gega stems the village of Trabojna with 180 households and 1,000 souls. The other three brothers and their descendants formed the village of Arapshi that now has 190 households and 1,150 souls.

With the exception of four families who converted to Islam, the Hoti are all Catholic and all speak Albanian. Both of the villages have their own banners [*bajraks*] and their inhabitants are considered to be the bravest of all these highlanders. The *bajraktar* of Trabojna is even called the leader of all of the highlands of Shkodra, and in Ottoman military formations, his banner is second only to that of Mirdita which is to be found at the extreme right wing, whereas the banner of Hoti is raised on the left wing. On the battlefield he receives thrice the normal rations, a privilege that was granted to an ancestor of his for some great deed and which he inherited.

When the Venetians attacked Ulqin/Ulcinj [Dulcigno], the Pasha of Shkodra hastened to save the town and camped across

from the Venetians. One day, when the pasha had given his army a day of rest, the *bajraktar* of Hoti began disputing with another highlander as to who was the bravest. The infuriated Hoti man suddenly seized his banner and, taking the Venetian battery by storm, planted it in amongst the enemy cannons. When the men of Hoti saw their banner moving, they did not want to abandon it and set off on the attack, too. The rest of the army followed and, in this way, the Muslims took the whole battery.<sup>1</sup>



# LEGEND OF THE FOUNDING OF THE KASTRATI TRIBE

Legend has preserved the name of the ancestral father of the Kastrati. He was called Detal Bratoshi. It is not known whether he was an Albanian or a Slav but legend has it that he came to the area which his descendants now inhabit, from Kuči, a Slavic region. He emigrated with his seven sons, but no reason such as murder or destitution has ever been given. The sons were called: Ivan Detali, Pal Detali, Nar or Ndoc Detali, Gor Detali, Jer Detali, Gjon Detali and Ali Detali. They initially took up residence in a cave on Mount Veleçik that is now called the Cave of the Sheep (*Shpella e dhenvet*) and was situated one hour from the home of the native Pjetrović. They lived in that cave for seven years. Since both their families and their herds grew tremendously in numbers, the native population began to look upon them with fear and concern for their own future. One day, they assembled the whole tribe consisting of three clans, the Pjetrović, the Tutović and the Pelaj, and discussed what should be done with the new cave dwellers. Some thought they should be invited over and made brothers. Others thought they should be attacked and slain. While they were arguing about a strategy, without reaching a conclusion, an aged man, 100 years old, arose in their midst and spoke as follows: 'My dear friends, I am an old man and I have gained much experience in

life. Listen to what I have to say so that an ill-conceived resolution does not do you harm. If it is God's will that brought these people to us, you cannot oppose them for they will destroy you all. However, if it is not God's will, they will flee from you like the clouds in the wind. To find out which it is, prepare a feast and invite the foreigners to partake of it. When everyone is assembled for dinner, place the table so far away from them that they cannot reach the food from where they are sitting. Then pay attention to what they do. If they get up and go over and sit at the table, you will know that they are submissive and will be your slaves. If, however, they get up and draw the table over to where they were sitting so that you are then too far away, pack up your possessions and flee in the night, because they will otherwise rob and enslave you.' The assembly agreed to act as the old man had told them. Detal was invited over and arrived with his seven young, strong sons, who all made a warlike and haughty impression. According to custom, a calf was roasted and placed on the table, the edge of which the invited guests could not even reach with their fingertips. When they understood what was going on, they frowned because they believed the natives were making fun of them. Visibly annoyed, they rose to their feet, seized the dining table and drew it over to them, leaving their hosts too far away, and proceeded to enjoy their meal.

Fate had spoken out against the natives and they fled that very night, taking their kith and kin with them and leaving only the old and weak behind them, those who would not have survived the journey. When Detal learned that the natives had fled, he left the cave with his children and went down and took over their houses and fields. The tribe he founded still owns that land to this very day. [ . . . ]

His sons took the best fields for themselves and left the rest to the remaining original inhabitants as they deemed fit. In this manner, although originally poor refugees, they came to form the main stock of the population.

Having lived a long life and having seen his family grow with many grandsons and great-grandsons and all the property



they needed, Detal died. His grave is to be found in a small field and is covered with a cairn of rocks.

Detal's sons remained in their new settlement for some time after his death. Since it was, however, a long and difficult way to their fields, they decided to settle in the old village to make life easier. They also hoped with time to acquire the region of Budisha where some of the inhabitants of Triepshi owned vineyards. The rest of that region lay fallow because of a lack of labourers. The settlement was largely abandoned because the Turks had carried off and enslaved all of the inhabitants. As such, they managed to extend their land right to the borders of Hoti, Shkreli and Budisha.

The tribe soon grew in numbers such that they could no longer all live together. They therefore built several new houses that were not far from one another. They also divided the land into three parts and drew lots to apportion it among their families. The southern part of the land was thus taken over by Ali, Gor and Jer, the northern part by Pal and Ndok, the middle by Ivan, Kaça and Leka, and the eastern part was left to the original inhabitants. The way they divided the land up has remained to this very day, each clan and assembly with its own property. Although they grew in numbers, they remained in these settlements. Only Ali, who was a shepherd and was wont to spend the wintertime on the plain, preferred the warmth and fertility of the lowland regions. Leaving only a few family members in the mountains, he settled on the plain with the rest. They still live there and form the main branch of the Kastrati tribe, although they are all Muslims.

The vineyards of Budisha belonged for a long time to the Bëkaj [Benkani] of Triepshi. They were one of the clans of Triepshi and consisted of twenty-five families. However, they came from a settlement in Montenegro called Rijeka Ivan Beka. Because of a blood-feud, their ancestors had fled to Triepshi where they swiftly prospered. They were all brave people and were much respected by the beys of Shkodra. One of their leaders had distinguished himself particularly and gained

favour with the pasha. On behalf of his clan, he asked for and was granted the abandoned vineyards of Budisha that stretch for about three-quarters of an hour up the valley at the foot of Mount Veleçik. Initially, the Bëkaj came over from Triepshi to work the land and harvest the grapes, but as the Detali clan grew in number, the Bëkaj decided it was easier to give them the vineyards in tenure and receive half of the harvest in compensation, or one-tenth as others say. The Detali thus paid tribute to the Bëkaj for many years. In the end, a conflict broke out among them that led to the Bëkaj losing the vineyards. This happened in the following manner.

One of Pal Detali's sons called Vuk Pala had many sons of his own, among whom were Ull Vuka, Kat Vuka and Ded Vuka. No man in the region equalled them in size and strength.

One day, Kat and Ded went over to Triepshi to call the Bëkaj to come and harvest the ripe grapes. There, they learned that two of the dogs in the house of the chief of the Bëkaj were called Kat and Ded. They were so infuriated at this that they drew their knives, slew the dogs and returned home. When they got back, they told their brothers about the insult, i.e. that the Bëkaj had named their dogs after the Kastrati, and that they had slain the beasts. In retaliation, they decided to stop paying the Bëkaj the tribute they owed them. Accordingly, they harvested the grapes alone, without waiting for the Bëkaj. When the Bëkaj heard what had happened, they assembled a corps of men from Triepshi and Kuçi and carried out a raid on the Detali herds that were grazing up on Mount Veleçik. They surrounded the pen at night and attacked at dawn, but the four shepherds who had been posted there fought back until three of them were killed. The fourth one managed to escape and sound the alarm, but the attackers plundered the pen and herded the animals away.

Ull Vuka was busy putting on his sandals when he heard the alarm call early in the morning. Without delay, and still without one sandal, he set off in a rush. Others joined him with such speed that they caught up with their foes at the crossing of the Cem River.

The Triepshi were driven back and lost four men on site. The Detali men chopped their heads off and stuck them on poles, returning home triumphantly with their retrieved herds. From that time on, they paid no more tribute and divided the valley of Budisha among themselves. One half was given to the Ivanaj and the other half to the Goraj who now bear the name Budishaj.

The descendants of the Detali subsequently grew in power, such that their neighbours feared them. They carried on with their raids and incursions that caused wars with the other tribes, the Shkreli, then the Hoti, and then the Kopliku, etc. They were even in conflict with the pashas of Shkodra, but always won out when the pashas sent troops against them. The pashas finally decided that it was best to cater to the chiefs of Kastrati with gifts and good treatment and thereby preserve peace. This turned out to be the best strategy because the Kastrati were quiet for quite some time, and even paid some tribute, a few paras per house.

Finally, a certain Tahir Bey of the great Chaushen family became Pasha of Shkodra. He planned to make the Christian Kastrati equal to all the other *rayah* [non-Muslims]. They were to pay *haraç* [the head tax] and submit to the legal authority of the *kadi* [Muslim judge] like the people living in and around the town. The men of Veleçik were not too happy about this. They considered the blood that flowed in their veins and resumed their raids and incursions once again. The pasha then mustered a large army that set off for Kastrati land. The Detali realised that they could not match the superior numbers of the pasha's army and took their women, children, livestock and other possessions back up to the cave where their ancestors had once lived. Only a couple of old people remained in the village. They were too feeble to be harmed by the pasha's soldiers.

Ull Vuka, Detal's great-grandson, was now chief of the mountain tribe. When the pasha discovered that the village had been left abandoned and heard that the inhabitants had fled into the mountains, he sent his men in their pursuit, not knowing

how difficult the terrain was. The pasha himself stayed at the house of Ull Vuka. The attackers soon encountered fierce resistance. They were subjected not only to the tribe's projectiles, but also to boulders and tree trunks that were hurled down the mountainside at them by the women and children. These resulted in many casualties. Ull Vuka observed the assault from his doorstep and, seized with fear, called upon Saint Mark for assistance, promising to build him a church and celebrate his feast day if the saint would help the men of Kastrati achieve victory. The battle then turned in their favour. When the pasha, who was staying with him, asked him who was winning, he replied: 'Your men, pasha, for they are well equipped. My men are naked and have nothing.' The pasha sent him outside to observe the fighting again and, when Ull saw the Turks fleeing for their lives and his own men shouting and pursuing them, he went back inside and cried: 'It has been done! It has been done!' The pasha asked: 'What has been done? Who won?' Ull Vuka replied: 'Now you will see!' and thrust a dagger into the pasha's heart. Even today, people will show you where the pasha was buried.

Turkish troops prevailed no longer. The Detali pursued them to the so-called Dry Creek (Përroi i thatë) and from then on, the bed of the river became their border. Those living on one side of it pay taxes like all the other people and submit to the authority of the *kadi*. Those on the other side live according to the laws of the mountains and only recognise the pasha.

The church that Ull Vuka promised to Saint Mark during the battle was built and his feast day is still held and honoured by the Detali.

Fighting with Shkodra continued until a more reasonable pasha took over and gave the Kastrati back their old privileges. Since that time there has been peace between them and Shkodra.

When they grew in numbers and the region where they lived could no longer support them, they began following Ali's example, who upon the death of his father had moved to the

plain of Bajza between the Dry Creek and the lake. Since the land here belonged to the beys and aghas of Shkodra, they leased it and initially only built a few simple huts on it where they spent the winter. In the summer they returned to their mountains where the climate was healthier. Gradually, however, the families on the plain sold their land in the mountains and, in return, bought the properties that they had earlier leased. And so it came about that more Detali now live on the plain, which they now own almost entirely, than in the mountains.<sup>1</sup>



# ALBANIAN FOLK TALES FROM THE ISLAND OF POROS

## The Snake Child

Once upon a time there was a king who had no children. But he employed a vizier who had three daughters. The wives of the two men were the best of friends. One day, they went into the garden to spend the day there and while they were eating and drinking together, the queen said to the wife of the vizier: 'You have three daughters. If I only had a son, we could be in-laws, because we are such close friends.' She replied: 'How nice it would be if you had a son, but unfortunately, God did not give you a son.' The queen cried out: 'I wish that God would give me a son, even he were only a snake.'

That evening, the queen slept with the king and her body was blessed, and when the time came, she bore a snake as she had wished. The snake grew rapidly and one day said to its mother: 'Listen, mother, do you remember what you said to the vizier's wife when you were in the garden together? I want to marry one of her daughters. Go and ask her to give me her eldest daughter.'

The mother got up and went to the vizier's wife and said: 'Give me your eldest daughter as a wife for my son.' She replied: 'What? You want me to give my daughter in marriage to a

snake? That will never happen. Go home and do not raise the matter again.' The queen went back to her son sadly and said: 'She will not have you.'

Several years passed. The snake then asked his mother again: 'Listen, mother, go and ask the vizier's wife to give me her second daughter in marriage.' The mother went to see the vizier's wife again. 'My son has sent me and asks for your second daughter.' The wife got very angry and said: 'Go away and never ask me again to give a daughter of mine to a snake.' The queen was disappointed and returned to her son, saying: 'She will not have you.'

Another few years passed, and the snake asked his mother again: 'Listen, mother, go and ask the vizier's wife to give me her youngest daughter in marriage. If she does not agree, I will slither into her house one night and kill them all.' The queen set off again to see the vizier's wife and conveyed her son's request in tears. When the vizier's wife heard what she had to say, she was terrified and did not know what to do. If she did not give her daughter away, she was afraid the daughter would be killed. So she called her daughter and asked her: 'Listen, my child. Will you marry the queen's snake?' The daughter replied: 'I will think about it.'

The maiden then went off to see an old wise woman and told her what had happened, asking: 'What should I do?' The old woman replied: 'Say yes, girl, because it is not a snake, it is a man who has no equals on earth. But on the night of your marriage, you must wear forty blouses because the snake has forty skins. When you go to bed and the snake says: 'Get undressed', you must say, 'You get undressed, too!' Your husband will take off one skin and you must take off one blouse at the same time. You must continue until he has taken off all forty skins, and only then will you see what a handsome man he is.'

When the maiden returned from the old woman, she said to her mother: 'Dear mother, I will marry the snake.' The mother cried out: 'Oh, oh, my poor daughter. Are you not afraid to sleep with a snake?' The maiden replied: 'Do not worry, it is not



your business.' When the mother realised that her daughter was serious about the matter, she sent a message to the queen and told her to prepare for the engagement and for the wedding festivities. On Sunday the queen set off, taking the rings and the snake coiled in a basket with her. The engagement and wedding festivities were held.

When the newly married couple went to bed, the snake said to its bride: 'Take off your clothes', and she replied: 'You take off yours, too.' One by one, they took off the forty skins and the forty blouses, and when the snake was naked, it turned out to be a handsome young man. They then slept together and the body of the young woman was blessed.

The next morning, the young man crawled back into his forty skins and said to the young woman: 'Never tell anyone that I am really a man until you give birth. Then we will let everyone know, but if you tell anyone beforehand, I will slither into a hole and vanish, and you will lose me forever.' The young woman replied: 'Do not worry. I will not betray you.' But she had problems with her mother who constantly insisted on knowing how she could live with a snake and how she got pregnant. The young woman replied only that she was fine and for eight months she resisted all temptation to speak. One day, however, the mother was so insistent that she could keep her secret no longer, and blurted out: 'Mother, perhaps you think it is a snake, but perhaps it is really a man unequalled on earth.' The moment she spoke, she regretted having done so, but it was too late. That same night, the snake sealed her womb and departed.

The young woman waited all night, all the following day, a week, and then a month, but her husband did not return. She was in great despair, she wept and moaned and cried, and did not know what to do. Finally, she decided to go out in search of her husband. Dressed in the garments of a nun, she wandered around at random. When she had wandered for some time, she came upon an old woman who asked her: 'Where are you off to, my child?' The young woman told her what had happened:

'My husband has left me and I am off in search of him.' The old woman replied: 'Climb up to the top of that mountain. On it there is a pond of stagnant water in which worms and other bugs are floating. You must drink the water there and say: "What delicious water!" And while you are standing at the edge of the pond, you must exclaim three times: "Earth, open up and devour me as you devoured my husband!" The earth will then open up and you must go down into it. When you get to the bottom, you will find the sisters of the sun and they will tell you where your husband is.'

The young woman climbed up the mountain that the old woman had shown her and found the pond of stagnant water. She drank the water and said: 'What delicious, crystal-clear water!' and then she exclaimed three times: 'Earth, open up and devour me as you devoured my husband!' The earth then opened up and she climbed down into it and came across the younger sister of the sun who was standing at the oven and baking bread. To wipe the oven, she used her breasts, and she shovelled the coal with her bare hands. When the young woman saw her, she took pity on her and went off in search of a rag and a shovel for her. The sister of the sun was very happy with this and asked the girl: 'How can I pay you back for the kindness you have shown me?' 'I ask only that you tell me how I can find my husband, because he left me', and she explained what had happened. The sister of the sun replied: 'Go up there a bit, where you will find my elder sister. She will tell you where your husband is.'

The young woman carried on and came to the other sister of the sun who, like the first one, was cleaning the oven with her breasts and licking it with her tongue. The young woman searched around and found another rag and another shovel, and brought them to her. The sister of the sun was very happy about this and said: 'Tell me, my friend, what can I give you to pay you back for the kindness you have shown me?' The woman answered: 'I ask only that you tell me where my husband is, because he left me and I cannot find him.'

The sister of the sun gave the woman a walnut, a hazelnut and an almond, and said: 'Take these and carry on a bit further. You will reach the house where your husband is living, but he is married to another woman.' The young woman continued on her way until she reached her destination. She entered and said to the lady of the house: 'Good woman, do you perchance have a small cottage in which I could live as a nun?' The lady gave her a small cottage near the place where a coppersmith lived.

The next morning the nun cracked the walnut given to her by the sister of the sun. Out of it emerged a golden hen with golden chicks that chirped and scuttled back and forth around her. When the young woman's maid saw the birds, she ran home and said to her mistress: 'Lady, the nun has a beautiful golden hen with golden chicks! They are so sweet. Let us buy them. What would a nun want with them?' When the lady of the house heard this, she was curious and said: 'Go back and ask her how much she wants for them.'

The maid went back to the nun and said: 'Listen, milady, how much do you want for the golden hen?' The young woman replied: 'It is not for sale, but I will give it to you as a present if your mistress gives me her husband for one night.' The maid returned to her mistress and told her what the nun had said, adding: 'We should give her the lord for one night. After all, she will not eat him. Before he goes, we will give him a sleeping potion.' The lady of the house did not like the idea at first, but the maid talked and talked until she gave in.

When the lord was ready for bed that night, they gave him a sleeping potion and when he was sound asleep, they carried him to the nun's cottage and received the golden hen and the golden chicks in exchange.

All night long, while the lord was sleeping beside the nun, she called out: 'Give me the silver key so that I can give birth to the golden child!' But all her calls were in vain. The lord did not wake up and at dawn, the lady sent her servants to the nun to retrieve him.

The nun then cracked the hazelnut, and out of it emerged a golden parrot. When the maid saw the bird, she ran back to her mistress, crying: 'Lady, what a beautiful parrot the nun has! It is all in gold. Let us buy it. What use is a parrot to her?' The lady replied: 'Go and ask her how much she wants for it.' The maid went back to the nun and asked her. The reply was the same. 'I want the lord for one night.' That night, they gave the lord a sleeping potion again and took him to the nun, where they received the parrot in exchange. Once again, the nun cried out all night: 'Give me the silver key so that I can give birth to the golden child!' All of her calls were once more in vain. The lord did not wake up and at dawn, the wife sent for him and took him back.

The coppersmith who lived near the nun had not been able to sleep because of the noise the nun had made on those two nights. The next morning, he went to the lord and said: 'Master, forgive me for being so bold, but I must tell you something. The foreign nun has kept me awake for two nights. She is deafening me with her constant cries of 'Give me the silver key so that I can give birth to the golden child!' What can she possibly mean?' The lord replied: 'Who knows what suffering the poor woman has gone through.' But he remembered the words of the coppersmith and began to suspect who the nun was.

The next morning, the nun cracked the almond that she had received from the sister of the sun, and out of it emerged a golden cradle. When the maid saw the cradle, she ran back to her mistress and said: 'Lady, the foreign nun has a beautiful golden cradle. I cannot take my eyes off it. Let us buy it for the children. Why would a nun need a cradle?'

'Go and ask her what she wants for it.' The maid went to the nun and asked: 'How much do you want for the cradle?' The reply was the same: 'It is not for sale. All I want is to sleep with the lord tonight.' The maid returned home and said: 'She will not take money. All she wants is to spend another night with the lord.'

When the lady heard this, she was furious and shouted: 'Let the Devil take her! I will not let her have my husband any more.' But the maid gave her no peace. 'Let us give him to her once more for the golden cradle. She did not eat him the other two times when he spent the night with her.' After much persuasion, the lady agreed: 'Alright, let her have him one more time.' The maid went to the nun and told her, and received the cradle in exchange.

But when the lord went to bed that evening and they gave him the sleeping potion, he suspected something was amiss and thought of what the coppersmith had told him. He turned over on his side and poured the potion into a sponge which he hid. He then pretended to sleep and they carried him off to the nun's cottage. When the nun was alone with him, she began calling out once again: 'Give me the silver key so that I can give birth to the golden child!' He let her call for a while and then said: 'Rise and get dressed. We must be off.'

He took her to the stable, brought out two fine horses, put her on one of them and mounted the other himself. Then they rode off to the place where the earth opens up. Three times he called out: 'Earth, open up. We want to go out.' The earth then opened and let them out. As soon as they got to the Upper World, her womb was unsealed and she bore a son, a beautiful child who was already nine years old.

They then rode back to her father's palace and celebrated. A great wedding feast was held where they ate and drank, and lived happily ever after.

It is not all true, but it is not all false either.

### The Silver Tooth

Once upon a time, there was a prince who had three daughters of marriageable age. At that time there was a war between the king and another ruler. The king mustered his army and sent word to the father of the girls to join him and then set off for war. When the prince received the message, he was very sad,

went into his manor and spent three days alone in his room in great sorrow.

The eldest daughter went in to him and said: 'Why are you so sad, dear father?' He replied: 'What can I tell you, my child? The king wants to make war on his neighbour and has summoned me to go with him.' The girl responded, saying: 'Off with you then, and do not come back! Poor me, I thought you were worried about which man to marry me to.' Having said this, she stormed out of the room and left her father alone.

Later on, the second daughter went to see her father and asked him: 'Dear father, why are you so sad?' The father replied: 'Why do you ask? Your elder sister asked me the same question and when I told her, she rejected me. And now you are coming around, too? Leave me alone. Let my sorrow lead me to an early grave.'

'No, father. I will not reject you. Let us deal with the problem together. I will help you.'

'This is what your sister said, and then she rejected me.'

'No, dear father, I will certainly not be that unkind to you.'

'Then let me tell you what is troubling me. The king has declared war and has summoned me to join him. I don't know who will take care of you during my absence.'

The maiden responded, crying: 'Off with you then, and do not come back! Poor me, I thought that you were depressed because you had not found me a husband.' She then stormed out and left her father alone.

Finally, the youngest daughter, called Theodorula, went in to see her father and said to him: 'Dear father, why are you sitting around and feeling so depressed? Will you not tell me the reason?'

'Go away, I was foolish enough to tell your two sisters and they both rejected me.'

'I will certainly not reject you, father.'

'That is exactly what the other two said, and they rejected me.'

'How could I possibly reject you? You are my father and I am your daughter.'

‘Alright, I will tell you what is troubling me. The king has declared war and has summoned me to join him. I don’t know what to do with you in my absence.’

When the youngest daughter heard this, she said: ‘Don’t be sad, dear father. Give me your blessing and three suits. I will go to war for you instead.’

The father had three suits made for her and gave her his blessing. The blessing took the form of a little puppy that went with her. Theodorula took the men’s clothes and the blessing with her and rode off to the town where the king lived. When she got to the king’s palace, there was an old woman at the gate who was talking to the king’s son: ‘See that young man with the beautiful face who is approaching? That is no man. It is a maiden. I would bet my head on it.’ When the king’s son heard this, he looked at Theodorula, was dumbfounded by her beauty and rushed off to see his father. When the maiden appeared before the king, she said: ‘I am a warrior and have come to fulfil my obligations on behalf of our region and farmhouse.’ The king responded: ‘Tell us your name then so that we can put you on the roll.’ The maiden responded: ‘My name is Theodor.’

When the maiden departed, the prince said to the king: ‘Dear father, that is not Theodor. That is Theodorula and she has stolen my heart. She is not a man, she is a maiden.’ At first the king would not believe him, but when the prince insisted, he said: ‘I will tell you what to do to get to the bottom of this. I will tell you how you can find out whether or not it is a maiden. Go with her to the town shop. On one wall, there are swords and pistols, and on the other wall there are rings, necklaces and other jewellery. If it is a girl, she will go over to the wall where the rings are hanging. If she goes over to the wall where the weapons are hanging, it is a man.’ But the puppy was in the king’s chamber at the time and heard their conversation. It ran out and told the maiden everything.

The next morning the prince spoke to the maiden: ‘Listen, Theodor, come along to the shop with me. They are selling

weapons.' And so they set off. When the maiden entered the shop, she immediately went over to the wall with the weapons, inspected them and bartered for them with the shopkeeper. The prince then said: 'Have a good look around. On the other wall are some beautiful rings and other jewellery.' She replied: 'Those are for girls, not for us', and took no notice of the objects hanging there. They bought two silver-plated pistols and returned home.

The prince went to see his father and told him what had happened. He laughed and said: 'Did I not tell you that it was not a maiden?' The prince responded, saying: 'But it is a maiden, father. She is called Theodorula and she has broken my heart.' 'I tell you,' said the father, 'it is a man. But if you do not believe me, try another trick. Go with him to a certain castle that has a staircase with 700 steps and climb up to the top. If it is a maiden, she will lose three drops of blood on the way up. If it is a man, nothing will happen.' But the little puppy heard this conversation, too, and ran off to the maiden and told her.

The next day, the prince said to the maiden: 'Listen, Theodor, let us go and visit that castle.' When they arrived and reached the foot of the staircase, he said: 'You go ahead.' 'No,' she replied, 'you are the king's son, you must always go first.' So the prince went up first and she went up after him. When they had almost reached the top, three drops of blood dripped onto the stairs, but the puppy licked them up so that the prince did not see them when he turned around to have a look. When they walked back down the staircase, another three drops of blood dripped onto the stairs, but the puppy licked them up again so that the prince did not see them when he turned around to have a look.

The prince then went back to the king and said: 'I saw no blood.' The king laughed again and said: 'Did I not tell you it was a man?' But the prince would have none of it. 'It is a maiden called Theorodula and she has broken my heart.' 'Well, then, try a third time,' responded the king. 'Invite her to go swimming with you and then you will see if it is a maiden or



not.' But the little puppy heard this conversation, too, and ran off to the maiden and told his mistress.

The maiden then went to see the tailor and said to him: 'Make me a garment with two types of buttons on it so that when I undo one button, the other button will do itself up.'

The next day, the tailor brought her the garment and she put it on. The prince arrived early the next morning and said: 'Listen, Theodor, why don't we go swimming?' 'Alright,' replied the maiden. They mounted their steeds and rode off to the seashore. When they dismounted, the prince said to her: 'Get undressed.' She replied: 'You get undressed yourself. I will be right with you.' She undid one button and then the next, but each time she undid one button, another one would do itself up again. When the prince saw that she had started to undress, he took off his clothes and dived into the water. At the same moment, the maiden mounted her horse and was about to set off. The prince, hastening back to the shore, took off his ring and threw it at her. The ring hit the maiden on one of her teeth, which broke off, and the remaining part of the tooth turned silvery.

The prince returned to his father and told him what had happened, crying out: 'I love her and want to marry her.' The father laughed and replied: 'How can I help you if you love her? Go and find her and marry her if you wish.'

The prince hesitated no longer and set off for the town where the maiden lived. On his way, he met a shepherd and said to him: 'Listen, shepherd, if you give me your clothes, I will give you mine.' The shepherd replied: 'Why do you want to give me your expensive clothes and get my poor rags in return?' The prince responded: 'That is of no concern to you.' The shepherd hesitated no longer and gave his clothes to the prince. In return he received the prince's fine garments.

In the next village, the prince bought a number of spindles and whorls and took them with him to the town where Theodorula lived. When he got close to her house, he called out loudly: 'Spindles and whorls for sale!' until the three

sisters came out to buy. When he caught sight of the one with the broken tooth, the remaining part of which was silver-coloured, he recognised her. When the maidens asked him: 'How much do the spindles cost?' he replied: 'I want no money, only a measure of millet.' They filled a measure with millet and poured it into his bag. He, however, pretended to stumble so that the bag fell onto the ground and all the millet spilled out. He then sat down on the ground and began picking up the kernels of millet one by one and putting them back in his bag. The maidens said to him: 'We will help you with a broom, because if you gather all the kernels by hand, you will never finish.' 'No,' replied the prince, 'it is my fate to gather up all the kernels of millet one by one.'

The maiden left him to do as he wished and went back into the house. The prince continued gathering the kernels of millet until it grew dark. When the maidens went to bed, he could see in which room Theodorula was sleeping. Later in the night, he snuck into the house and went to her bed where he threw some magic herbs over her to make her sleep soundly. He then picked her up, threw her over his shoulders and carried her off. When they got back to his palace, the roosters were crowing and the drowsy maiden spoke out: 'How beautifully the roosters are crowing, as if they were the king's own fowl!' The prince replied: 'Indeed, the roosters belong to the king and the palace belongs to the king, and his son has brought you here.'

He brought her to his father, married her and is still wed to her to this very day.

### For the Love of a Dove

Once upon a time, there was a king who had only one daughter. She did nothing all day but knit. She had no female friends and never left the house. All she did was sit in her room and work. Her mother often said to her: 'Listen, my child, why don't you get married? We can marry you to a handsome prince or

a young nobleman.' But the girl would have none of it and always said no.

One day, while she was sitting and embroidering alone in her room, a dove flew in through the window and fluttered around her embroidery frame. The princess took the bird in her hands, but then let it go; she held it again and stroked it. The bird gave her such joy! After a while the dove asked her: 'Do you love me?' and she replied: 'Yes, I do.' Then the dove said: 'If you really love me, put a bowl of milk out tomorrow and you will see what a handsome man I am.' Having said this, it flew off.

The next morning, the princess had a shepherd bring her a pail of milk. She poured it into a bowl and waited for the dove to appear. When it arrived and saw the bowl of milk, it dived into it, left its feathers in the milk and emerged as a young man who was so handsome that the princess threw her arms around him and began to kiss him. He spoke out, saying: 'Sit down first and listen to my conditions and then you can kiss me.' She sat down and he continued: 'The first condition is that you must never reveal my true form to your parents and the second condition is that you must wait three years for me to return. If you tell anyone, I will not come back.' The maiden replied: 'I promise to do everything just as you wish', and they exchanged rings. The young man then dived into the bowl of milk again and flew away as a dove.

From that day onwards, the young man visited her every day as a dove, caressed her and flew away as a dove. Two years passed, and throughout that time, the queen endeavoured – each day more and more – to persuade the maiden to get married. The princess refused with equal determination until she could resist no longer and revealed to her mother the secret of the dove, blurting out: 'Leave me alone, mother. I am already wed to a young man and he has no equal on earth!'

From that day on, the dove did not come any more. She waited day after day, week after week, month after month, but all her waiting was in vain. The dove did not appear because the maiden had revealed its secret. The maiden grew sadder and

sadder. She wept and moaned all day, and begged her father: 'I want my dove, give me my dove or I will die of sorrow!' Her father tried to console her, saying: 'My child, do not despair. I have a handsome prince and a young nobleman for you. They both want to marry you. Take one of them and forget about the dove!' 'No!' cried the maiden, 'either it is the dove or I will die! Have three pairs of iron shoes and three walking canes made for me. I will set off in search of it, and will not stop until I have found it.'

The parents pondered: 'We have lost her one way or the other. Let us fulfil her wish.' They had the shoes and canes made, as she requested, and gave them to her, and she departed. The maiden wandered for three long years, without ever pausing. Whomever she met on her way, she asked about the dove, but no one had seen it. After three years of wandering, she returned home.

After his daughter departed, the king had the whole palace painted black as a sign of sorrow. When she got back, sunburnt and frail from the trials and tribulations of her journey, she went to her room and locked the door. When her father knocked at the door, she opened it and said: 'Father, have a large bathhouse built and let it be known throughout the land that everyone, rich and poor, may bathe in it, but that each of them must tell me a tale to relieve me of my sorrow.' The father did as his daughter had requested and, when the bathhouse was ready, people, rich and poor, came from far and wide to bathe in it, and each of them went to the princess and told her a tale.

In the king's city, there lived an anaemic old woman who had a daughter, and when the daughter heard about the bathhouse, she said to her mother: 'Dear mother, give me your permission to go bathing and to tell the princess a story.' The mother would not allow her to go at first because they were so poor, but the maiden insisted and continued asking until the mother agreed.

First of all, however, the maiden took a jug of water and went to the village fountain to fill it so that her mother would

have enough to drink until she got back. While she was at the fountain, a rooster that was wearing wooden shoes crossed her path.

When the maiden saw the rooster in the wooden shoes, she was amazed and said to herself: 'I am going to go and see where the rooster is off to.' Following it with the water jug on her back, she saw the rooster enter a garden and pick fruits and vegetables and put them all in its basket: lettuce, onions, garlic, oranges and many other things.

When the rooster left the garden, it took the basket home and the maiden followed it. She slipped into the house and hid in a corner. There she saw a large vat of milk standing in the middle of the room. After a while, eleven doves flew into the room, dived into the milk, leaving their feathers in it, and emerged as fine young men who were as fair as angels.

A twelfth dove then flew into the room. This one did not dive into the milk, but perched on the edge of the vat. The young men spoke to it: 'If you were married, you could come with us, but your wife revealed your secret and therefore you can't turn into a man any more.' The dove replied: 'Yes, she revealed my secret, and I have caused her and her family to paint their palace black and to paint their hearts black, and have caused her to wander around the world for three years in search of me.'

When the maiden heard this conversation, she stole out of the room, forgot to fill her jug with water, and hastened home. There, she put the empty jug down and called out: 'Mother, I now have a wonderful tale to tell the princess.' Then she ran to the palace. There were other people with the princess, so she had to wait her turn and spent the night there. It was not until the next morning that she was received.

When she came before the princess, she said: 'Lady, I can tell you a wonderful story that I heard yesterday.' 'Tell me then, my child,' responded the princess. 'I would like to hear it.' The maiden told the princess exactly what she had seen and heard and, when she was finished, the princess stated: 'You have

done well, my child, to come to me, but now take me quickly to that house.'

The maiden led the way and the princess followed her, and when they got to the house, the princess hid behind the door and waited for the doves to come.

The eleven doves came first, dived into the milk and turned into young men. Then came the twelfth dove and perched on the vat. When the princess heard how the others were making fun of the twelfth dove, she jumped out from behind the door and threw her arms around the bird. This made the dove turn into a man, and they married and lived happily ever after.

### Marigo of the Forty Dragons

Once upon a time there was a king and a queen who had only one daughter, a girl who was the fairest child in the whole land. Every morning her mother washed her, combed her hair, dressed her in fine clothes and, when she was ready, sent her off to school. The teacher washed and adorned the girl again when school was over. Then she went home for dinner. This went on day after day, and the girl did not know whom she loved more – her mother or her teacher.

One day, the teacher said to the child: 'Listen, Marigo, why don't you get rid of your mother and make me your new mother because I can dress you up so finely and can teach you how to read?' The child responded: 'How am I supposed to kill my own mother?' 'I will tell you how. You can do it if you want to. Come over here and tell me if you want to kill her or not.' 'Tell me first of all how to go about it, so that I'll know how it can be done, and then I will tell you if I want to kill her or not.' 'Alright,' said the teacher, 'when you get home, tell your mother you want some figs and almonds from the marble chest. Since you are her only child, she will order the maids to bring them to you. But you must tell her that you don't want the figs and almonds from the maids, but directly from her. She will get up and go over to the chest. When the lid is opened, you must

not let the maids hold it. You must hold it yourself. And when your mother sticks her head into the chest, let the lid fall, so that it snaps shut and kills her. Then run away and come back to me.'

When Marigo got home, she asked her mother for some figs and almonds from the big marble chest. The mother got up to get them for her. When the maids opened the chest, Marigo pushed them aside and held the lid up herself. When her mother stuck her head into the chest, Marigo slammed the lid on her head and she died. Marigo then ran back to her teacher and told her what she had done. The king summoned his priests and had his wife buried.

After a while, the teacher spoke to the girl again: 'Marigo, why don't you ask your father to marry me, so that I can be your new mother? I can take better care of you than your old mother did.' When the maiden went back home that evening, she spoke to her father, saying: 'Why don't you marry my teacher? She is so attractive and can take better care of me than mother did.' The king responded: 'I will marry your teacher when my shoes turn red.'

When the maiden went back to the teacher the next morning, she told her what her father had said. The teacher replied: 'When you go home this evening, take some red dye with you and paint your father's shoes to make them red. And then say: "Look, father, your shoes have turned red! Now you can marry my teacher."' "

When the maiden went home that evening, she got hold of the king's shoes and painted them red. The next morning she said to him: 'Look how red your shoes are, father! Now you can marry my teacher.' The king replied: 'I will marry your teacher when my robes are full of holes.'

The maiden told this to her teacher, and the teacher replied: 'When you go home this evening and your father is asleep, take his robes and cut as many holes into them as you can with the help of these scissors.'

The maiden did as the teacher ordered. She cut hole after hole into her father's robes, and spoke to the king the next

morning: 'Look, father, your robes are full of holes! Now you must marry the teacher.'

What else could the king do? Now he had to marry the teacher. She was a beautiful woman, but Marigo was even more attractive. A couple of years passed and Marigo had become more beautiful than ever. One day, the stepmother said to the king: 'You must kill Marigo. If you do not, I will die.' The king replied: 'How can you demand that I kill my own daughter?' She responded: 'You must do it. It is either she or I. One or the other.'

What was the poor king to do? He resisted for a time, but in the end he said to his wife: 'Bake a loaf of bread and fill a flask with wine. I will take them with me and lead the girl somewhere to kill her.' The evil stepmother prepared the bread and wine and put them in a bag. The king put the bag over his shoulder and took his daughter by the hand. They wandered here and there until they arrived at a site overlooking a mighty river. Marigo wondered and asked: 'Tell me, father, why have you brought me here to this desolate place surrounded by cliffs?' 'Just because,' said the father as he considered whether or not to carry out the deed. Then he spoke again. 'Listen, my child, I am going to throw this loaf of bread and this wooden flask of wine over the cliff and you must run after it and bring it back up to me.' What else was the hapless girl supposed to do? So she promised: 'Alright, father, I will do it.'

He hurled the bread and the bottle over the cliff, and the girl clambered down to get them. But the father then said to himself: 'It is better to let her live whatever happens. I cannot kill her.' And he ran away.

The girl clambered back up the cliff with the bread and the wine and looked around for her father, but he was not there. She called him in the loudest possible voice: 'Father, where are you? Father, dear father!' but there was no reply, so she hastened over hill and dale in search of him, moaning and groaning: 'Father, my father! Oh, woe is me!' but the father was nowhere to be found. That evening she arrived at a forest and said to herself:



'It is getting dark and I don't know where to go. I will climb up a tree and spend the night in it, and tomorrow I will go home.' She climbed up the tree and was sound asleep in no time because she was very tired.

In the night, the three goddesses of fate came by. One said to the other: 'Look, there is a girl sitting up in that tree. Let us decide her fate.' The other two said: 'Shall we wish her good or evil?' The first one replied: 'Only good!' The eldest of them approached the tree and said: 'Listen, Marigo, there is a small child down on the bank of the river. Go and find it, wash it, and take care of it.' Then the second goddess approached and said: 'Listen, Marigo, down at the river you will find an old woman combing her hair. You must comb it for her until it is all straight.' Finally the third goddess approached and said: 'Listen, Marigo, if you go a bit farther, down at the river, you will come across a castle inhabited by forty dragons who are all brothers. You must go into the castle early in the morning and sweep the rooms and do the dishes. You may eat and drink there and then you must go into hiding so that they do not see you when they get home.'

The maiden set out the next morning and arrived at the castle. She went in and swept the rooms, washed the dishes and, when she had eaten and drunk, she went into hiding. That evening, the dragons came home and found everything spick-and-span. They wondered who had done them such a service. 'If it is a young woman, we will make her our sister. If it is an old woman, we will make her our mother, and if it is a man, we will make him our brother.' But the maiden was too afraid to leave her hiding place and, the next morning, when the dragons went out, she cleaned the house again and hid. That evening, the dragons whispered among themselves: 'One of us must hide so that we can find out who it is.' The next morning, one of them stayed home and lay in wait, but he was unable to catch sight of the maiden. Another dragon tried the following day, but was equally without success. One by one, they all spent one day at home until it was the turn of the fortieth dragon.

He discovered the maiden and sat her on his lap, kissed her and called out to the others: 'Look, now we have a little sister. But from now on, you must not do any work. You must only enjoy yourself, for we have a great treasure of jewels and money and you can have as much of it as you wish.' The maiden stayed with them and was treated very well by the forty dragons.

But one morning, her stepmother went outside, looked at the sun and said: 'Sun, I am fair and you are fair. Everything around me is fair and everything around you is fair. Is there anyone on earth who is fairer than I?' To this the sun replied: 'You are fair and I am fair. Everything around you is fair and everything around me is fair. But no one on earth is as fair as Marigo of the forty dragons.'

When the queen heard this, she began fighting with the king, saying: 'You did not kill your daughter after all. You lied to me!' He retorted: 'No, I did kill her', but the queen did not believe him and shouted: 'No, no! You didn't kill her at all, for she is living with the forty dragons, and if you don't want me to die, you must take these hairpins and search until you find her. When you get there, give her the hairpins for they are poisoned and she will die from them.'

What was the unfortunate king to do? He dressed up as a travelling Jewish merchant, took the poisoned hairpins with him and searched until he got to the river where he had last seen his daughter alive. When he arrived at the castle of the forty dragons, he called out: 'Hairpins for sale! Hairpins for sale!' When the maiden heard him, she came out onto the balcony and greeted the Jewish merchant: 'Hello, merchant!' without realising that it was her father. As soon as he saw the girl, he recognised her as his daughter, and said: 'Dear child, buy one of my hairpins, for they are fair to behold.' The maiden answered: 'What would I do with your hairpins? I have much finer ones myself. The ones the dragons gave me are studded with diamonds.' The father replied: 'That may be, but they are not as fine as my hairpins. Come, child, buy a hairpin from me so that I can make a bit of money.' The maiden let herself be deceived

and bought a hairpin from him, and when she went back into the house, she stuck it in her hair. That very moment, she fainted and fell onto the sofa.

When the dragons got home that evening and saw the lifeless body of the maiden lying there, they began to moan and groan, and cried out: 'Oh, sister, little sister!' Finally, one of them noticed the new hairpin in her hair and exclaimed: 'What is this hairpin in her hair? She did not get it from us!' Another then said: 'Bring her over here so that we can see where it came from.' One of the dragons removed the pin from her hair and, that very moment, the maiden opened her eyes and cried: 'Where have I been for such a long time?' The dragons asked her: 'What happened to you? Where did this hairpin come from?' She explained what had occurred, saying: 'A Jewish merchant came around and I bought the hairpin from him and the moment I stuck it in my hair, I fainted.' The dragons then replied: 'Oh, Marigo, did we not tell you that we would give you everything you wanted and that you should never take anything from anyone else? See what has happened? Don't ever do that again.'

The king returned home a few days later and his wife asked him: 'Did you poison her?' He replied: 'Yes I did, and she is dead.' When the queen heard this, she was relieved. The next morning she went outside and spoke to the sun: 'Sun, I am fair and you are fair. Everything around me is fair and everything around you is fair. Is there anyone on earth who is fairer than I?' To this the sun replied: 'You are fair and I am fair. Everything around you is fair and everything around me is fair. But no one on earth is as fair as Marigo of the forty dragons.' When the queen heard this, she got much angrier than the first time and, when the king came home that evening, she began shouting and fighting with him, saying: 'Why did you lie to me and say that you killed your daughter? She is alive and well. One of us must die, either she or I. Take these rings. Go and give one of them to her. The moment she puts it on her finger, she will perish.'

The king got dressed up again, took the poison rings and went to the castle of the dragons, crying out: 'Rings for sale! Rings for sale!' The maiden heard him and went out onto the balcony. When he saw the maiden, he called to her: 'Come down here, my child, I will sell you one of these beautiful rings.' But the maiden replied: 'No, I won't, because just a few days ago, a Jewish merchant came around and sold me a little hairpin, and I was chided for buying it. Aside from that, we already have rings, as beautiful as you could possibly imagine. I don't want any of your rings. Take them away!' The king then said: 'My child, I do not claim that you have no fine rings. I only want you to buy one of mine because I am a poor errant merchant. Buy one of them and consider it as alms that you are giving me.' The maiden was once again deceived by his words. She came out and bought a ring from her disguised father. When she went back inside, she took off her old rings and put the new one on that she had just bought, and died on the spot.

When the dragons got home that evening and saw the lifeless maiden, they called to her and shook her, but she was not asleep. She was dead. Everything they did to try and revive her failed. What were they to do? They considered the matter for some time and, finding no solution, they built a coffin for her, adorned it with pearls, and put the maiden in it. They then carried the coffin off to the garden of another king. There was a fountain there from which the horses drank. Near it there was an ancient tree. The dragons hung the coffin in the tree, suspending it on four silver chains so that it would dangle right over the fountain.

The next day, when the other king's stable boys took the horses out to drink at the fountain, the reflection of the pearls adorning the coffin shone in the water and their sparkle terrified the horses so that they would not drink. The same thing happened on the second day and on the third day. The stable boys were confused and frightened, and ran off to the king to tell him that the horses had refused to drink for three days. The king went out to the fountain to see what was amiss. When he

saw that the horses would not drink, he looked into the fountain himself and was dazed by the sparkle of the pearls. When he looked up to see where the sparkle came from, he saw a coffin hanging on four silver chains. He ordered the boys to take it down and, when it was removed, the horses approached the fountain and drank their fill.

He then had the coffin taken to his room and, as soon as he was alone, he opened it. What did he see? His mouth hung open in amazement at the beauty of the girl lying in it. From that day on he was filled with such sorrow that he neither ate nor drank. His servant brought him his meals every day and removed the meals uneaten in the evening. Day after day, week after week, month after month his condition got worse and worse. The poor king was as thin as a rag.

One day, his mother came to see him and said: 'What is wrong, my son? What has happened, tell me! I am your mother.' He replied: 'I am fine, just leave me alone.' Almost a year went by without the king eating or drinking a thing. The mother finally went to see one of the young noblemen in that kingdom to whom her son was particularly attached, and said to him: 'Listen, my child, my son is not well. It has been almost a year now that he has not left his room. Go to him and see if you can persuade him to come out.'

The young man went to the king and asked: 'What is wrong, my good friend? What has depressed you so? You have a great kingdom and huge wealth and, instead of enjoying life, you look as if you would prefer to die. If you carry on this way, it will be not only the death of you but also the death of your good mother. Come, let us go out for a while. Let me distract you from your morbid thoughts.' The king initially refused, but his friend pressured him to such an extent that he eventually agreed to go out with him for a while.

Once they had left the palace, the mother commanded her maids, 'Come with me. Let us search through the king's chamber and see what it is that has depressed him.' They had just begun their search when they came across the coffin under

the sofa. They pulled it out and opened it up. How amazed they were to see the beautiful girl lying in it. The mother then spoke, saying: 'This is what has depressed my son. Quickly now, girls. Heat up the oven and throw the body into it. Let us burn it. Otherwise the king will perish himself.' When the oven was ready and the maids were about to take the body and throw it in, one of them saw the ring on the girl's little finger and said: 'Wait a minute, let us first remove the ring from her finger. It looks very expensive.' The moment they removed the ring from her finger, the girl stood up and exclaimed: 'Where am I? Where are my brothers, the forty dragons?' When the queen heard this, she ordered her maids to put the ring back on the girl's finger, and she immediately fell lifeless to the ground. They put her back in the coffin and shoved the coffin under the sofa.

When the king returned from his walk, he locked himself in his chamber again, opened the coffin and looked at the girl. A few days later, his mother came to see him and said: 'Dear son, why don't you tell me what is troubling you?' He replied: 'Don't bother me. You cannot help me anyway.' She responded: 'Who knows? Perhaps I can.' She kept at him until he finally pulled out the coffin and asked her: 'Can you revive what is in this?' 'Why not?' answered the mother. The king opened the coffin and the mother removed the ring from the girl's finger who woke up immediately and stood up. The king took her into his arms and kissed her. She then asked: 'But where am I?' The king replied: 'You are in the royal palace and shall be my queen.' They then got married and lived happily ever after.

# AN ACCOUNT OF PEDERASTY IN CENTRAL AND NORTHERN ALBANIA

Of all the amazing information contained in these pages, perhaps nothing will surprise the reader more than the fact that there is a land in Europe in which Doric pederasty, as described by ancient authors, flourishes up to the present day and is an integral part of the customs and lifestyle of its inhabitants. This land is northern Albania. I made the discovery by accident while studying the poetry of Nezim, a selection of which is given in the language samples [included in the original German text]. I was so disgusted by the linking of this so-called vice with all that is sacred to man and by the enthusiasm which these songs inspired in my Gheg teacher that I was one day no longer able to suppress my amazement. At first, he did not understand me. When he finally realised what I was getting at, he asked with a sense of indignation whether I considered the Ghegs to be Tosks or Ottoman Turks, who treated their boys like prostitutes. The Ghegs reserved quite different feelings for them, which were as pure as the light of the sun and which put the beloved one on an equal footing with a saint. They were the most exalted and sublime feelings which the human heart was capable of. He did not wish to deny that there were exceptions among the Ghegs and that from time to time this

love deviated from the ideal, but assured me that it was usually pure, and custom demanded it to be so.

After having discussed the matter with him sufficiently, I decided that the method I had used to obtain information about customs in Riza would be the best course of action. I therefore asked him to write down everything he had told me, whereas I have simply limited myself to toning down excesses of exuberance in the text and to explaining or eliminating any obscurities of a mystical nature. Aside from this, the account is true to the word. For those who should happen to find allusions to days of old in this description, I must note that the young man had no idea that the ancient Dorians loved their boys in the way his people did. He regarded this form of love as the exclusive characteristic of his people.

On a subsequent tour through the country, I was able to confirm completely what he reported of this strange custom. Pederasty seemed to be such an integral and profoundly rooted part of life as a whole there that I rejected my initial suspicion that it had been introduced with Islam. On this point there is a significant – perhaps the major difference – between the custom of the Ghegs and that of the Tosks. The Tosk sings more of erotic love. Pederasty is not so deeply rooted in his customs and, when it does occur, it usually does so as a vice. The pure form also occurs, but only rarely. It is not as widespread as among the Ghegs who, as I was told on numerous occasions, never sing of relations with the female sex. The Serbs and Bulgarians know neither form of this love. When it does occur among them exceptionally, it can be said to be a borrowed custom from foreign peoples. But let us allow the Gheg to speak for himself:

Love is instilled by the sight of a beautiful boy. He produces in the beholder a feeling of admiration and opens the door of the latter's heart to the pleasure which is to be had by looking at beauty. Gradually love takes hold of the lover to the extent that his thoughts and feelings



are entirely absorbed by it. Whenever he is near his beloved, he is engrossed by him. Whenever he is far away from him, he thinks of nothing else but him. Should his beloved approach unexpectedly, he will become confused and change colour, paling and then blushing. His heart beats so intensely in his breast that he can hardly breathe. He has eyes and ears only for this beloved. He will observe how his beloved walks, how he moves, how he opens and closes his eyes, how he raises his eyebrows, and how he opens and closes his mouth. He will listen to the tone of his voice and to the idiosyncrasies of his speech and spend days and nights thinking of nothing else but his attractiveness. If he succeeds in establishing a closer relationship with the boy, he will recommend three things to him in particular: to avoid contacts with others, not to allow his body to be defiled, and to be devoted to him alone. He is so insatiable for the boy's company that he will not leave his side from sunrise to sunset, if the beloved allows him to do so. He avoids touching the boy with his hands and kisses him very rarely on his forehead as a token of his esteem since it is from here that divine beauty radiates. Any thought of physical pleasure is so remote from him that he would rather violate his own sister than the boy.

Should he learn that the boy is dallying with others or that he has been subjected to an assault by someone else, perhaps to take revenge on the parents or on the lover himself, he will abandon the boy for good. In his conversations with the boy, he never ceases to stress the depth of his feelings and the fire in his heart and to tell him of the protection he will give him and the sacrifices he is willing to make for him. Nor does he cease inculcating in him the three above-mentioned rules. If the beloved disobeys them or counteracts them secretly, the lover will not only scold him but beat him, as a father would his son, but this does not reduce his love in any manner.

Should the lover discover that his beloved is also loved by others, he will attempt to get rid of his rivals by all possible means. He will use the most terrible threats to forbid his beloved from having any dealings with them and will forbid the rivals from approaching his beloved. If they do not heed his prohibition, brawls can occur, which often lead to murder. Rivals will also challenge one another to a duel, the victor receiving the beloved and the vanquished falling into depression and going insane. Should the beloved boy be from a wealthy family and be able to resist the bidding of his lovers, it often happens that the latter leave the country entirely so as not to be overwhelmed by grief and sorrow. If the family is not strong enough, however, it happens more often that the beautiful boy is sent abroad in secret in order to avoid disaster. Kidnappings do take place, committed by powerful lovers, but their aim is rarely pure.

Religion has no influence upon his love. A Muslim can love a Christian, a Christian can love a Muslim. Indeed many a Christian has converted to Islam when his beloved promised to accept him under this condition.

The lover follows his beloved's every footstep. Should he learn for example that the beloved has gone to a country fair or otherwise left for the countryside, he will follow him immediately, however long the journey may be, in order to watch over him when he sleeps under the stars at night. The lover is indifferent to his beloved's relationships with younger boys and, should such affections occur, they are no cause for jealousy. The younger boys then also come under the protection of the lover.

The lover is always intent on pleasing his beloved. He will give him money, fresh fruit and delicacies. He will have clothes made for him and bestow on him whatever he can, including valuable presents. Nonetheless, it is rare for the beloved honestly to requite the love of which he is the object. Initially he is always standoffish and only gradually

will he take pleasure in the attention he is receiving, either because the strength of feeling flatters him or out of self-interest or fear. It is generally accepted that the ardour of the lover is reflected in the beauty of his beloved. The more that rivals choose him as the object of their tender feelings, the more magnificently the beauty of the boy will radiate.

An inclination for this type of love usually begins at the age of sixteen and lasts three, four, five or more years. The boys begin to be loved when they are about twelve years old and are abandoned when they are sixteen or seventeen. At this point, love often turns into hatred. The lover comes to realise what he has suffered at the hands of the beloved and considers taking revenge, which can lead to murder and more often to rape. It is, however, rare that this period of time should be occupied by one love alone. It can be taken for granted that every young man has been the object of such affections two or three times before he gets married. With marriage, this romantic period of life usually comes to an end.<sup>1</sup>



## SOUTHERN ALBANIAN LOVE SONGS

1.

*Bairámit dy berë ndë mot,  
Shykjýr t'i bánjim perndísë,  
Sot árfa, nëssër Bairám,  
Tshdo dylbér lje t'na mendóijë;  
Kush të jet Turk më din islják  
Ashíkun lje t'a gëzóijë.*

2.

*Nji dylbér dullj ndë Vljónë,  
Erdh'e kondísi ndë Berát,  
Tsh'i shkëljkjén fákja si mol,  
E si sermája, kur merr savát.  
Bezisténi tsh'ubán rezílj,  
Mjéri un' tsh' pásksbam thánë.*

*Pa bisë dólja si jetím.  
Tsh'ogradísa me dshánë.*

3.

*Móra málljët' e fúshët'.*

*Báfti im sa vjen po ljargón.  
Mjéri un' tuk e kjaré  
Préij sýsbë gjak po më kulón.*

1.

Twice a year Bayram's upon us,  
Therefore let us thank our Saviour,  
The eve's today, Bayram's tomorrow,  
Let our lovers not forget us.  
Whoever's Turk and fresh in faith,  
May he gratify his lover.

2.

A lovely boy to Vlora'd gone,  
Then came to Berat, paid a visit,  
How his cheeks like apples shone,  
Or like black-enamelled silver.  
The marketplace has lost its lure,  
Oh, wretched me, what have I  
uttered?

With no money I'm an orphan,  
How I've suffered from this lover!

3.

I crossed the peaks and trekked the  
plains,  
My luck forever fleeing forward,  
Wretched me, I must lament while  
From my eyes the blood is draining.

*Firáku mend na i ngrítti  
E na zun më të marumë.  
Zémëra íme si ashkë kjiibríti  
Undës e s'ka të shúmë.*

Separation's made me moonstruck  
And has stolen all my senses.  
For my heart is like a firebrand,  
Raging, will not be extinguished.

4.  
*Ndë Sarájet' artsh e të páshë  
Ke po ríjë posí aslân.  
Uhúthtsh e ndër kam të rásbë;  
Im zot na ban dermán,  
Me tsa róbe híe shúmë  
Vëdsbúti yt posí melékj.  
Si ndë zot kam me ukjukúm  
Se únë prëij téje kam békun kékj.*

4.  
I came and watched you in the palace  
As you lounged there like a lion,  
At your feet prostrate I've fallen,  
Oh Lord, grant me some solution!  
In your graceful flowing garments  
Floats your body like an angel.  
To the Lord I must lament of  
All that for your sake I've suffered.

5.  
*N'atë meitép, n'atë dshamí,  
Ke këndóin' tsa bilbílja.  
Mësóij mírë Muláb Salí  
Të búkur' si kairafílja.  
Fájthín' tsh'e bána vétë.  
Ej! kjë të zúna për dylbér!  
Ugjikófschim m'atë jëtë  
Kji m'a bánë behárin zebér.*

5.  
In that college and that mosque  
Where the nightingales are trilling,  
Teach him well, Mullah Sali,  
That lad who's fair like a carnation.  
What an error I committed  
When I took you as my lover.  
In that next life you'll be judged  
And found to've poisoned  
all my summer.

6.  
*Ljumë kush i ban báhtshes'  
bysmét,  
Vjen nji vabt kjë tsbéljin'  
trandafiljat'.  
Tsb'i merr máli për dylbérat',  
Kur zan' e këndóin' bilbíljat'.  
Tre tamám po bëin tri vjet,  
  
Mishi tsop e grim' utrér',  
Se i thómi nji fjalj e s'fljet;  
Tsb'i ban kam úna i mjéri?*

6.  
Praise to those who tend the  
gardens,  
The time's now ripe, the roses  
blossom.  
How I long for all my lovers  
When the nightingales start singing.  
Three full years have come and  
vanished,  
And my flesh is torn and withered,  
When I speak, he will not answer,  
How've I sinned to earn this silence?

7.

*Fort e shof, se s'më zenj bësë  
Se un' të dúa me hakikát.  
O kairafilji me ves,  
Shpírtin' t'a dbashë amanéti.  
Munj ke tshésmeja në tshartsbí.  
Thásbë se do dallj t'a grabís,*

*Un' e shof se s'anjsht noj dobí,  
Se anjsht ngjit' më një zabít.*

8.

*S'gjen ndónji zok kji këndón,  
Të gjith' jáné e po kjaínë.  
I mjéri ashík sa fort po durón!  
Préi dylbérit po e dainë.  
Díli kji ljen në mëngjést  
Si ti, o djalj, kur më zalandíse;  
Kur më këthén syt' e zes',*

*Shpirt, mend préi kres'  
m'i gremíse.*

9.

*Ma s'e pritti ljótia ljótin,  
Ma sun po e vúi sevdánë;  
Mynafíkët po kalëzón,*

*Po ljiftóinë me na dámë.  
Ju, o kjen, mos helmóhi  
Séj të keni Sulljóhen.  
Vjen një vabt këj gëzóbí,  
Si të báinj fet Morénë,  
Kjysh të gëij një mik të mírë  
Të më det si t'a dúa,  
T'i dëftéij gjith' síret  
Të kja bábkhë me múa.*

7.

I see clearly that you doubt me  
For I genuinely love you.  
My fresh morning dew carnation,  
I gave my life to you and pledged it  
At the fountain in the market,  
Thought I would go out and pluck  
him.

But I see no chance to do it,  
He is guarded, well protected.

8.

Nowhere are the birds a-singing,  
All are silently lamenting.  
How the lover suffers for they've  
Parted him from his beloved.  
You, oh lad, when you were with me,  
Were my sunshine in the morning.  
When your black eyes gazed upon  
me,

Soul well-cherished, I went crazy.

9.

One tear follows yet another  
It's the pain of love I suffer.  
Oh, those schemers, talking,  
plotting,  
As they struggle to divide us.  
Oh, you dogs, betray no sorrow,  
Sulloh's now in your possession.  
There will come a time of rapture  
When they conquer the Morea.  
How'll I find a true companion  
Who will love me as I love him  
And I'll tell him all my secrets  
So that we may weep together?

10.

*Të káli Hasán káfpeja*  
*Të mos bánjish Bairám,*  
*Se kështú kjén' ka bes' e fëja*  
*Núri yt, o Suleimán!*  
*Bukurinë t'a dha zot yn,*

*Mos ubán maktúr.*  
*Týij, o tsun, të púhtsba syt*  
*E t' udjéksba nur.*

11.

*Sa do ta, o dylbér, sa do ta*  
*Mos merr setsb të thónë bóta,*  
*Se bóta thónë nj' e dy*  
*Me na dam mu e týij.*  
*Kush umundóft me na dam*  
*Mos pushóft ty e kjámë.*

*Shíu pushón ber' nga hérë*  
*Ai mos pushóft as dímën as vérë.*

10.

You were called a whore by Hasan  
 That you did not honour Bayram,  
 Thus it's been with faith, religion.  
 Suleyman, you know it was  
 Our Lord who gave you all your  
 beauty.

Do not vaunt and be conceited.  
 Let me, lad, now kiss your eyelids,  
 At your grace I stand in ardour.

11.

Whate'er befalls us now, my lover,  
 Listen not to what the world says,  
 For the world says 'one' and 'two'  
 To separate us, me and you.  
 Now and then the rain stops falling,  
 May they, though, ne'er cease  
 lamenting,

Those who try to separate us,  
 Ne'er cease, in winter and in  
 summer.<sup>1</sup>



PART III

CORRESPONDENCE



## LETTERS TO THE SCOTTISH HISTORIAN, GEORGE FINLAY

*While he was serving as Austrian Consul for Eastern Greece on the island of Syros, Hahn was in contact with the noted Scottish historian George Finlay (1799–1875), author of the seven-volume History of Greece from its Conquest by the Romans to the Present Time (Oxford 1877). After Greek independence, Finlay had bought a country estate in Attica and later lived in Adrianou Street in the (largely Albanian-speaking) Plaka district of Athens where he devoted himself to the history of Greece and where he is said to have had a certain influence on Greek politics. Finlay was one of the most productive historians of his period. He had a particularly strong influence on German scholars. Among them was Hahn, who was twelve years his junior. The following is a selection of Hahn's letters to Finlay, written in German and mostly in Sütterlin script between the years 1861 and 1866. They are preserved at the British School at Athens.<sup>1</sup>*

Syra, 16 June 1861

Esteemed friend,

I am finally able to send you the report of my journey. From the title, you can see that the delay was not my fault, and

that the Academy took far longer to publish the work than I did to undertake the journey and write an account of it. 'Slow and steady' would seem to be the motto of that venerable institution, and this is why they took such a dislike to the title I had chosen, 'By Carriage from Belgrade to Salonica' and toned it down to 'Journey from Belgrade to Salonica'. My intention was to inform those who would only see the title of the book that the primary result of the journey was that it is now possible to travel between these two cities and, thus, to inspire interest in the railway project. In presenting the work, it is thus important to stress this *fait accompli* as the prime *argumentum ad hominem*. Since you were so kind as to promise me that you would present it at the Atheneum, I would ask you to emphasise this fact in particular.

The work now gives me the impression that I placed far too much stress on mortal nature for the taste of most readers. Had I, however, shortened this aspect, I would have to have sacrificed the aim of the journey which was not touristic but scholarly. I have brought this up at the end of the description of the journey, on page 127, and would ask you to cast an eye upon this before you begin reading.

I would also like to draw your attention to my view on the nature of the Turkish State (page 15), the development of the social crisis (page 83), the reform (page 98) and the spiritual crisis that humanity will be facing from steam and electricity (page 51).

With sincere respect,  
your devoted  
Hahn

From the date of this letter you will see that it is already two weeks old because I was compelled to make other use of the copy I had reserved for you and therefore had to wait for another delivery.

I am also enclosing my offprint of the first sheets that contain my views on the railway issue and add that I could send you a dozen copies thereof if you were interested in having them distributed in England. You only need to send me the addresses. I would then send the prints to Liverpool and have them expedited by mail. I am giving the Academy a further twelve full copies for distribution and would like to send some to the most prominent members of English society. Could you therefore send me their addresses?

Syra, 12 January 1862

Esteemed Sir and friend,

Please accept my thanks for the kind gift and my sincere congratulations on the completion of the series of books that will ensure you a place of honour among historians. The final pieces of this whole endeavour are different from the earlier parts since you were an eyewitness to the events that you describe. It will serve as a source for a period of history that has certainly remained dark.

I have been so obsessed by an archaeological work in the last few days that I have only been able to leaf through the book. I hope to finish the work this week so as to be able to devote all of my attention to your book. I will read it with the intention of presenting it to the German public. However, as I have never done such a thing, I am not sure if I will succeed.

I hope that I will soon be able to send you a very interesting discovery on the genesis of Ionian columns. I believe I have found all of the motifs on them in Grimms' work on mussels. With the help of the architect Ziller, who is the construction supervisor of the Aachen Academy, I have prepared a model for them, based on the proportions of the columns of the Nike temple.

With sincere respect,  
Hahn

Syra, 8 June 1862

Esteemed friend,

According to what we agreed upon, I would request that you give the enclosed offprint of my travel work to His Excellency Mr Elliot and ask him on my behalf to offer the same support to the issue raised in it as did his predecessor, Sir Thomas Wyse.<sup>2</sup>

Baron Prokesch<sup>3</sup> was in the best of health when I met him and he warmly reciprocates your greetings. He intends to go on holiday in August.

With my cousin from Athens who bears the same surname as I do, I intend to leave Syra on the indirect Lloyd boat that sails tomorrow, in order to have a look at Zante and Cephalonia which I have only seen from a distance. Unfortunately, the boat no longer stops at Ithaca and so, once again, I will have to sail past the home of our friend Odysseus without seeing it.

I repeat that, should you have any requests to make of me, you should send them by letter to Jena.

Respectfully yours,  
Hahn

Syra, 23 May 1863

Esteemed Sir,

I am writing on the day before the mail leaves out of fear that I may be too busy tomorrow to thank you for the kind messages from the Hellenic historian group that I received on the mail day. Unfortunately, I do agree with you that the lighting [in the photograph] did not treat you kindly, but at least you have your eyes open whereas poor Rangabe<sup>4</sup> looks quite blind.

I hope nonetheless that the Attic light will treat you better at other posings and would ask you to send me a copy of any

such photo to correct the impression left by the group portrait. I am enclosing a product of Nuremberg photography that should be of particular interest to you as it will no doubt be the best in your collection. A dozen copies cost 2 light gulden.

I am impatient to receive the results of the London Protocol because I cannot go on leave for my Albanian trip until things have settled down here.

For your information, the municipal party here in Syra has taken root so deeply that peace and order will not be disturbed. I am not sure, however, whether things will remain peaceful if the parties are in confrontation in the capital.

Things are rapidly advancing in the publication of my folk tale collection. I am now considering an edition of the Greek text. Since the first edition of my journey from Belgrade to Salonica is out of print, I have received authorisation from the Academy for a second edition. This new edition will omit the whole chorographic and hypsometric portion which will be replaced by a short geographical and ethnographical survey of the whole peninsula.

As you can see, I am doing my best to keep aloof from day-to-day preoccupations.

Yours with warm regards,  
Hahn

Syra, 2 August 1863

Esteemed friend,

I am finally able to inform you that the ninth of this month is the day on which I intend to set off on my Albanian trip, and would ask you to send me any requests you may have concerning Shkodra, Dibra, Skopje or Monastir.

The project, which was originally conceived for me alone, has grown over time into a veritable expedition. At the start, I asked the astronomer Schmidt and the photographer Beck to

accompany me, but I was rejected by both of them. Since I was then determined to proceed, I wrote to Vienna with an official request for an astronomer and a photographer. I believe I already informed you that one of our best young naval officers has offered to accompany me. Our travel group will thus consist of six men, including two sailors who will serve as helmsmen and servants.

A few days ago, Hopf<sup>5</sup> in Hamm sent me supplements to his documentary discoveries on Albania, and now that I am finished with the extract of Barletius,<sup>6</sup> I feel I am as well prepared as possible with regard to history.

I have not heard anything about my collection of folk tales for quite some time now. However, I suspect that the work is very close to being published, if it has not already come out. I therefore hope that I will be able to send you a copy of it when I get back, that is to say, if indeed I do get back.

I have conferred the job of correcting the Greek texts to Professor Pinousopoulos and intend to publish them sometime next year in the hope that they will achieve for the Greeks what Grimm did for us. At any rate, I hope that the Greek legends will have more of an echo than the *Mystères de Paris*.

Yours with sincere respect,  
Hahn

Syra, 31 August 1864

Esteemed friend,

Many thanks for the translation and the kind words that I received with today's steamer. I will send the former back next Sunday. As to the latter, I would like to inquire as to whether you might find it more expedient to send the announcement you intend to make directly to the said address with the request, if it should not be published, that it be sent on to the Atheneum. Such a practice is quite common in Germany. However, should it not be usual there, you could ask one of your friends to have the



15<sup>CS</sup> Pyramiden October, 1864.

Ungeliebter Freund

Während ich in Verlegenheit bin, wie  
ich mich gegen Sie wegen meiner Schwig-  
samkeit entschuldigen könnte, entschul-  
digen Sie selbst sich bei mir! Ich kann  
Ihren mir sagen, daß ich nach verschiede-  
nen Seiten so dringend beschäftigt war,  
daß mir kein Augenblick übrig blieb.  
Die meiste Arbeit machte mir ~~der~~ Ver-  
such meine geographischen Studien über  
mehrere Theile Albaniens durch schriftli-  
che Fragen zu erweitern u. zu ergänzen.  
Sie können sich denken welche Bücher  
voll Fragen

Figure 4 A Hahn letter in Roman script, dated 4 October 1864.

25  
 2  
 Syrachon 16ten Juni 1861  
  
 Herrnschaften Schenken.  
  
 Erstlich bin ich in Ruanda, Gnanmainnen  
 Dinstenreise zu überreichen. Und dem  
 Titel werden Sie erhalten, und diese letzten  
 Jüngling nicht meine Sied ist, und  
 und die Akademie nicht länger zum  
 denken gelänge, und ich für die Dinst und  
 ihren Aufsatz, "Eile mit der Heile"  
 steht der Mollo dinsten erhalten  
 Rönzgenstücken zu sein, und dem  
 man den Aufsatz auf den für  
 die Aufsatzung zum ersten Titel:  
 "Zu Hagen von Galynd auf Sulo"

Figure 5 A Hahn letter in Sütterlin script, dated 16 June 1861.

article published. If this should not take place within two or three weeks, he could pick the article up there and deliver it to the Atheneum. I need not assure you that I would much prefer to have an article written by you than by Cooper.

Yours,  
Hahn

Syra, 4 October 1864

Esteemed friend,

In my embarrassment at trying to find a means of excusing myself for my silence, you write and excuse yourself to me! I can only say that I was so urgently occupied with various matters that I had no time whatsoever. What caused me the most work was my attempt to expand and supplement my geographical studies of several parts of Albania by means of written questions. You can imagine how many volumes of questions I have had to send out in order to get sufficient information to sketch the maps I need. I am very intent on success in the matter. You would be amazed at our lack of knowledge of the geography of that region. Can you imagine that of all the place names given on Kiepert's<sup>7</sup> map for the Mat region, not one of them still exists, and that of all the present settlements, none of them are on his map? The same is more or less true of the lakes of Resnja and the valley of Dibra. Just south of the town of Dibra there is a small river, sixteen hours in length, that flows into the Black Drin River. There are quite a few villages on it. It is to be found on no map.

However, back to our work. You requested my opinion on the Mendere-Scamander. Here it is. Unfortunately, it turned out much longer than I intended, despite all my attempts to keep it short. If you would be kind enough to translate it, I think that page 7 would be the best place to add it as a note to the words, 'which he agrees with me in considering to be the Mendere of today.' The word 'which' on the last line would have the number 2.

I am very grateful for your sketch of the Hellenic gate that reveals affinities to the gate in the Reyer passage. Please delete the sentence on page 8 or 9 of the first letter: 'Mr Ziller recognises in this arrangement – with a slope' and replace it with something like: 'the form of that door recalls the antique gates of Amphissa, Phigalia and other Hellenic cities (see Gell... Tab...), but it excels by the elegance of its plan and execution.' Also please delete the part that mentions the Tamburia.

The sentence at the end of the first letter, 'This state of things authorises us to conclude', should read something like this: 'This state of things renders (makes) it questionable whether these substructions belong to historical times or must be referred to a date preceding them', or something similar.

As concerns the bands on the white rectangular slabs to the right of the Spratt terrace, I will send you Ziller. I hope he has a drawing of them. Perhaps room can be found for them on the current pages and no new page will be needed. If you wish, and only if you regard this as necessary, you could add a capital letter on the diagram of the first letter.

I would like to remind you to send the work to Newton before publication so that he can hold a lecture on it at the Royal Society.

This would seem to me to be the best strategy if it helps to get the work published in a review, although I am not in a position to judge this. The main thing, however, is that the work be published properly and in its entirety and that we get a number of copies to distribute to friends.

Once again, my warmest thanks. With the arduous work you have done, you have earned the right to request anything of me that I can do for you. I very much regret that you had to copy the translation yourself, but that is how you wanted it.

I was also very sorry to hear that you are unwell. The best way to recover in this country is a change of air. I have a small

but nice guest room that Herbert can describe to you. If you would agree to come over for a visit, I would be more than delighted. I, too, need a rest because I work too much when I am alone.

Yours,  
Hahn

You say you are looking for your Thirwall<sup>8</sup> book. I do not have it. Herbert will send you the copy of the Mendere-Scamander.

Syra, 10 January 1865

Esteemed friend,

Together with my belated, though no less sincere best wishes for the New Year, I am enclosing the German copy of the letters addressed to you. My brother is dissatisfied with this edition because it is too arduous for the general public. The print is far too compact, in particular in the second part. The work is, however, only the precursor of a larger book. The essence of this work is simply to show that in historical times there was a city on the site where the *Iliad* puts Pergamos and that it was probably called Gergis. If the reader is unable to understand this, the book is not meant for him.

Meanwhile, Frank Calvert<sup>9</sup> sent me his article on Gergis. This led me to look into the matter once again and I agree with him entirely. I believe that roads are among the most conservative things on this planet because nature itself carved them into the ground. The road from Sardes along the Scamander to the Dardanelles (Abydos or Chanak Kalessi) follows along the Mendere (Scamander), but then turns to the right of the Fayze an hour or more above Bali Dag, and continues for about an hour east of Ilium Novum. It was there that Xerxes turned after he sacrificed to Athena, and continued on his way to Abydon, leaving Rhoition, Ophryinion and Dardanon to his left and Gergis to his right. As such, I believe

that the march of Xerxes as given by Herodotus (VII, chapter 43) is in accord with Calvert's view. Why from Homer's time to that of Xerxes and probably much earlier, the Homeric saga did not move to New Ilion, I cannot say. However, there can be no doubt as to the move in the age of Alexander and Caesar, etc.

I would like to have sent you Calvert's work but he did not send me any offprints this time and, as such, I had to send the journal back to him. Such offprints do not appear to be common in England, so I would ask you, if it is not too late, to order from Mr Narton a couple of dozen prints for distribution to our friends. I would gladly pay for the offprints. Because of Herbert's journey, he forgot to compensate you for your postal expenses. Would you be so kind as to give them to Schmidt.

Yours,  
Hahn

Syra, 17 January 1865

Esteemed friend,

I am currently busy with the statistical part of my trip up the Drin, and it would be interesting for me to compare it with the material given by Grisebach in the description of his journey. Might I ask you to send me the second part of that travel book for a week via our legation?

With the last mail, I sent some of the details of Bachmaier's pasigraphical system<sup>10</sup> to Baron Testa<sup>11</sup> for him to have a look at, which its author had sent to me from Munich.

What must be said about pasigraphical endeavours in general is that they are impractical because they require far too much training in advance. This is, however, not the case for this one, and I regard the issue as completely solved. The solution is a veritable philosopher's stone. It is hard to understand how it was not found earlier. Have a look at our numerical cipher system, for which every correspondent has two keys. He ciphers according to an alphabetically ordered key and deciphers

according to an arithmetical one. The cipher number for a concept is the same for all languages. For example, day = 8, night = 9, and there are special signs for singular and plural, and for past, present and future. Thus, every person whose language has such a common key is able to read everything that is written in this cipher. The author calculates that 6,000 ciphers are quite sufficient for the normal exchange of ideas (excluding special sciences).

The discovery has thus been made. For the moment, however, it seems to me that, in addition to all the preparation and training needed to apply it, the world is not ready for its use in practice. What I find particularly fascinating is the public usage of a discovery that was originally designed to keep secrets. The person who invented this numerical cipher would certainly never have dreamed of such a success.

Yours,  
Hahn

Should this issue intrigue you as it does me, I would suggest that you get a copy of the brochure of Baron Testa.

Syra, 29 January 1865

Esteemed friend,

Enclosed you will find the said copy for the minister. To spare him the pain of having to reply in writing, I would ask you to hand it to him personally when you have an opportunity.

Next week I hope to complete the chorographic part of my Albanian journey. It is a painstaking and thankless task. Only a quarter of the journey itself remains to be written. The drawing of the various maps can only be added to the work as a whole when Dr Schmidt has revised his astronomical calculations and when I have received replies to the many questions I sent out.

Our knowledge of this part of the world is far behind that of the region from Belgrade to Salonica. Behind Tirana,

I discovered a region that has been totally unknown up to now, including a stream to the east of Dibra that is ten hours in length, on which there are many villages, etc.

The historical Scanderbeg has vanished. All of my effort to find a folk song about his deeds failed. On the other hand, his name has been covered over by mythology, according to which this ever victorious hero is forced by superior foes to flee abroad. He therefore becomes a sort of Dietrich of Bern. But in the German saga, Dietrich returns victorious to his homeland. The return part has been forgotten in the Albanian saga. It only tells of his flight. This is a rather curious phenomenon that, in my opinion, provides insight into the nature of myths. Hopf has discovered much in archives on the *historical* Scanderbeg and given the material to me for the moment to use. I have also succeeded in matching the Roman Via Egnatia from Dyrrachium to Thessalonica with the modern road, up to a difference of 11 MP. Ochrida and Lignidus turn out to be the same. Leake was wrong to dismiss their existence.

I will be relieved when I am able to leave Athens and get back to more interesting work.

Yours,  
Hahn

Many thanks for Grisebach, a volume that I have found very useful.

Syra, 18 August 1865

Esteemed friend,

Enclosed please find Grisebach that I am at last returning to you with many thanks. I have finally finished the description of my journey, but it is very unlikely that I will be able to send you a copy of the published version in the next six months.

I am leaving tomorrow on the French steamer for Marseille to go to Paris to arrange for a French translation of my troika,



and to find a publisher for the translation of my *Journey from Belgrade to Salonica*. From there, I will be continuing on to see my brother in Jena and will be in Vienna at the end of October to present my new travel book to the Academy at its opening session.

If you should have any requests, please send them to our legation.

Did you receive any news about the publication of the English translation?

With great respect, as always,

Yours,

Hahn

Syra, 15 July 1866

Esteemed friend,

Forgive me for the delay in thanking you for your kind words and the gift that you sent with them. The pressure on me at the moment is taming all of my energy. I try to resume work on the manuscript of the Homeric Troad or on the one on comparative mythology, but quite often I have to put them down without having changed or added a thing. The only thing I succeed in doing at the moment is reading, and I am therefore reading much more than I usually do.

Yesterday, I finished reading Max Müller's<sup>12</sup> (English-language) *Lectures on the Science of Language* which I very much enjoyed. The book reads like a novel and this Max Müller fellow has a rare gift of making the most obscure things not only palatable but also interesting. Although few of the issues he raised were new to me, I must admit that I learned a good deal about the world, and in a very pleasant way. I would therefore very much recommend that you read the book if you have not already done so. I know it only in the German translation. The English original is said to be impeccable. Müller is the right man to make the new science of linguistics fashionable in England.

I am considering doing the same for comparative mythology and sagas, hoping thereby that this sister discipline will be accepted as a full-fledged member of the independent sciences.

Yours,  
Hahn

# LETTERS TO THE ARCHBISHOP OF ANTIVARI, CARL POOTEN

*The Catholic religious figure Carl or Karl Pooten (1807–86) was a native of Teveren near Aachen in Germany. He studied theology in Rome and, after being ordained as a priest in 1833, served as an apostolic missionary in Wallachia. He was then apostolic administrator of Antivari (Bar) in 1834–55, during which time he rose to the rank of a Bishop of Maronia in Ragusa (Dubrovnik) in 1844. On 31 August 1855, he was appointed as Archbishop of Antivari, and on 15 March 1867, he was made the first archbishop of the new united diocese of Shkodra, including Antivari, a position he retained until his death. Hahn met him on his first journey to Shkodra in 1850 and again in 1863 before he set off up the Drin River.<sup>1</sup>*

Syra, 4 January 1866

Reverend Archbishop,

I searched for quite some time during my stay back at home for something that would compel Your Grace to have me and my feelings for you in mind constantly. When I came upon the enclosed picture in a shop selling oil paintings, I cried out, 'That is it!' Accordingly, I would ask you to hang the picture in

your bedroom in such a way that your eyes fall upon it the moment you wake up.

On my outward journey, because of the cholera quarantine, I travelled through Marseille, Lyon, Geneva and Berne to visit my brother in Jena where I stayed for two months. I used my time to correct the copies of my work and to fill in several gaps. I then left for Vienna where I spent three weeks revising the map that took most of my time. As such, as usual, I spent most of my holiday working instead of enjoying it. Nonetheless, the trip has strengthened and revived me. I returned via Trieste and sailed past the windows of my house in Syra on the way to Constantinople so as to spend five days at the quarantine hospital there instead of eleven days on the island of Delos.

In Constantinople I was delighted to hear that the Internunciature<sup>2</sup> succeeded recently in sending Don Melgusi [Melgushi] back home. He more than compensated me for everything I was able to do for him by answering the catalogue of questions I sent to him via our attaché. Following my written instructions, he drew a very useful map of Mirdita, the first one ever. His adventures have thus, *mirabile dictu*, had a lasting effect on scholarship. It is unfortunate that I was not at home when he passed through. Otherwise I would have kept him here for a whole week. Should you have the opportunity, I would ask you to convey my greetings to him.

I regret that, in the confusion of my departure, I was not able to thank Monsignors Perisch, Dodmassei<sup>3</sup> and Bugarelli for the work they sent me. I am so overloaded with things to do at the moment that I must ask you to do this for me. I wish to add in this connection that although I have finished my present travel book, I do not regard my work on Albania as completed, and would therefore be grateful for any information about the country that you can provide.

The easiest way would perhaps be in the form of notes on Hecquard's book.<sup>4</sup> While reading the parts with which one is more familiar, one could jot down corrections and additions by

simply referring to the page numbers in the book, and then have the notes sent to me when the opportunity arises.

Is Prefect Gabriel able to read French? I have a special request to make of you, my most reverend friend. During your visitations in your archdiocese, I would ask you to keep a diary in which you note down the distances between the villages, major rivers and mountains you pass through, measuring them in hours as is usual in this country, as I did on my journey from Belgrade to Salonica, and add any other notes on things you find of interest. I would then publish them under your name or anonymously in the monthly *Mitteilungen* of our Academy or in some other periodical. Perhaps one of your suffragans would be interested in such work. In many, many ways, Albania is the most interesting country on the continent and, as such, any information gathered about it is of extreme interest to scholarship. I was unable to find out what happened to the little church bell that I sent to the archbishop's vicar in Prizren shortly after my return from Albania. Perhaps you can find time to ask about it on your next visit to Shkodra. Should you come across it and see that it has not been delivered, feel free to do with it as you wish. Send it on to Don Melgusi or to Don Angelo<sup>5</sup> or to anyone else you think would appreciate it.

Greetings to Bradasch and his wife.

In cordial reverence,

Hahn

Syra, 27 May 1866

Reverend Archbishop,

You may congratulate me on the final manuscript of my travel book that is now ready to go to press. I have it here in front of me and am simply waiting for the last copies in order to send it off.

When I delivered the first and second sections (travel sketches and statistical notes) and the map to the Academy on

the day of my departure from Vienna, there were only a couple of annexes left that I had hoped to finish within six weeks. Those six weeks turned into six months and, while I was working on them, the annexes grew to such an extent that I was forced to create a third section for the book. It contains a number of treatises on Albanian history and on ecclesiastical and economic affairs in Albania, etc. You and your research are mentioned in the historical parts of the second section. I ventured to express the wish that you should publish some of your work. Most important for me, and in particular for secular history, would be your information on Arbenia since I have discovered it to be the county and home of the famed Thopia family.

The Mat region is primarily the basin of Bena. If there were no bishops of Bendenses and Canovienses at the same time, it would still be possible for the same diocese to have different names in different periods. All I can say is that Hunavia was situated to the west of the southern Mat region and that the road from Durrës to Dibra led through it. Perhaps you will be able to measure its length more accurately.

By the way, I recall that in my *Albanian Studies*, volume 1, page 334, I referred to Hungarian immigration to Albania and that Don Melgusi told me that the Ugri [Ungrej] in southern Dibri, the western *bajrak* of Mirdita, stemmed from Hungary. He did not give me any more details. It would be good if you could keep this in mind and, when you have an opportunity, ask Don Angelo, to whom I convey my greetings, to make further inquiries and get more information about this.

As to the defunct dioceses, I agree with you entirely, but it also occurred to me that Ep. Canoviensis is just another form for Hunaviensis. An 'Episcopus Chunaviensis in Albania' is referred to in a Neapolitan document dating from 1310. Unfortunately, the name of the bishop is illegible.

Hunavia is known to have gone over from the Orthodox to the Catholic Church in 1256.

According to Acropolites,<sup>6</sup> Chapter 67, this region must be situated around Ndërrenje [Ndroq], because he states as follows: 'I then left Durrës and, passing through Chounavia, crossed the mountain range known as the Bad Cliffs (κακή πέτρα) to reach Mat and from there, Dibra.' What was called the Bad Cliffs, was known at the time of Barletius as the White Cliff, Petralba, and is now called Gur i bardh. This mountain pass separates Hunavia from [...].

The tribe is probably under the authority of the parish priest of Kashnjet so it would be most appropriate for him to ask the *pleqtë* of the tribe for more information.

This is, however, not the only request I have to make of you today. I have long been looking around for the letter in which Monsignor Dodmassei mentioned his year of birth and the year in which he was consecrated, but I have not been able to find it. If I am not mistaken, he was transferred to Kallmet in 1865. Could you send me this information as soon as possible?

What I am also missing are the personal details of the Bishop of Shkodra who provided me with such excellent statistical material.

Could I ask you to send this to me, too, as well as anything you can remember about Monsignor Bugarelli, without writing to him directly?

The personal information about you and about Monsignor Severini has already been included in the manuscript.

Should you happen to know how long Monsignor Perisch was parish priest in Janjevo, I would ask you to note it down for me. If not, there is no need to ask him.

As soon as I have sent off the manuscript, I will send you Hecquard's book and my *Journey from Belgrade to Salonica*. I still need them for the moment.

With great reverence,  
Hahn

Greetings to Herr Bradasch and his wife.

Syra, 6 January 1867

Reverend Archbishop,

First and foremost, my belated though no less cordial best wishes for the New Year. I hope it will bring you the fulfilment of all your wishes, including no doubt compensation for all the damage you suffered last year and a stop to the destruction of everything.

I received Bradasch's masterpiece on my return from Santorini where I had an opportunity to inspect the recent, very curious pre-historical excavations. I returned here via Crete.

I can now at least inform you that the first section of my travel book was sent off to the printer about four weeks ago. Four sheets of the second section are also ready. The first section consists of 188 pages in quarto. The two other sections that are printed more tightly will together, no doubt, take up less space. But I do not think that the book will be ready before the beginning of March. Your name is at the head of the list of donors. Do be patient. In the meantime, please read at your leisure the Hecquard book that I have finally sent you. When you have finished it, I would be delighted to receive any comments you might have. It would be best if you could enter them all in a little notebook and paste it into the book at the beginning or the end. This is my method, and I find it very practical because then the notes do not get lost and are always available.

I would be very grateful to you if you could send me your views on the current situation in northern Albania and Montenegro and your predictions for the coming spring. Here, we are expecting a general uprising in the spring, in particular if the revolt on the island of Crete spreads, which looks very likely.

Greetings to Bradasch and his wife.

With great reverence,  
Hahn



# NOTES

## Introduction

1. G. Grimm 1964, pp. 52–3.
2. G. Grimm 1964, pp. 90–1.
3. J. G. von Hahn 1867, p. 1.
4. *Ibid.*
5. There is no more trace of his grave in Jena.
6. L. Thalloczy (ed.) 1916, vol. 1, p. 111.
7. M. Lambertz 1948, vol. 1, p. 3.
8. G. Stadtmüller 1950, pp. 407–8; G. Grimm 1964, pp. 299–300.
9. The editor wishes to thank Janice Mathie-Heck of Calgary (Alberta) for her kind revision of the final manuscript.

## Travels through Albania

1. The original place names used by Hahn are added in square brackets in the travel texts for historical interest.
2. Peutinger Table (*Tabula Peutingeriana*): illustrated road map of the late Roman period, preserved in the Austrian National Library.
3. Daniele Farlati (1690–1773), author of the eight-volume *Illyrici sacri* (Venice 1817).
4. *The Chronicle of the Priest of Dioclea* was a mediaeval chronicle compiled in about the fifteenth century – part history, part fiction.
5. J. G. von Hahn, *Albanesische Studien* [*Albanian Studies*], Jena 1854, vol. 1, pp. 52–95.

### Travels through Kosovo

1. Alfred von Arneth (1819–97), Austrian historian.
2. J. G. von Hahn, *Reise von Belgrad nach Salonik* [*Journey from Belgrade to Salonica*], Vienna 1861.

### Travels through Northern Albania

1. August Grisebach (1814–79), German botanist and professor in Hanover, who travelled through northern Albania in 1839.
2. Carl Pooten (1807–86), Archbishop of Antivari (Bar) and Shkodra.
3. Heinrich Kiepert (1818–99), German cartographer.
4. The small Camadolese community of Benedictine monks, founded by Saint Romuald, stems from the hermitage of Camadoli in the hills of Tuscany near Arezzo (Italy).
5. J. G. von Hahn, *Reise durch die Gebiete des Drin und Wardar* [*Journey through the Regions of the Drin and Vardar*], Vienna 1867.

### Legend of the Founding of the Kelmendi Tribe

1. J. G. von Hahn, *Albanesische Studien* [*Albanian Studies*], Jena 1854, vol. 1, pp. 183–5.

### Legend of the Founding of the Hoti and Triepshi Tribes

1. J. G. von Hahn, *Albanesische Studien* [*Albanian Studies*], Jena 1854, vol. 1, pp. 185–8.

### Legend of the Founding of the Kastrati Tribe

1. J. G. von Hahn, *Albanesische Studien* [*Albanian Studies*], Jena 1854, vol. 1, pp. 188–92.

### An Account of Pederasty in Central and Northern Albania

1. J. G. von Hahn, *Albanesische Studien* [*Albanian Studies*], Jena 1854, vol. 1, pp. 166–8.

## Southern Albanian Love Songs

1. J. G. von Hahn, *Albanesische Studien* [*Albanian Studies*], Jena 1854, vol. 2, pp. 147–9.

### Letters to the Scottish historian, George Finlay

1. We are grateful in this connection to the British School at Athens and to Bejtullah Destani of Rome for making these letters available. We also wish to thank Stephan Trierweiler of Berlin and Ilse Metzler of Essen for their assistance in deciphering the letters written in Sütterlin script, which was no easy task.
2. Sir Thomas Wyse (1791–1862), Irish diplomat and political figure, British minister to Greece from 1849.
3. Anton von Prokesch-Osten (1795–1876), Austrian Ambassador in Greece in 1834–49.
4. Alexandros Rizos Rangabe (1810–92), Greek scholar and diplomat, a prominent figure in the Greek classicist revival.
5. Karl Hopf (1832–73), German historian and expert on mediaeval Greece.
6. Marinus Barletius (c.1450–1512), Italian historian of early Albania, author of *The Siege of Shkodra* and *The Life of Scanderbeg*.
7. Heinrich Kiepert (1818–99), German geographer.
8. Connop Thirwall (1797–1875), English bishop and historian, author of *A History of Greece*.
9. Frank Calvert (1828–1908), consular official in the eastern Mediterranean.
10. An artificial international writing system based on characters and mathematical symbols, promoted by Anton Bachmaier.
11. Heinrich von Testa (1807–76), Austrian ambassador to Greece in 1860–8.
12. Max Müller (1823–90), German-born philologist and Indologist at Oxford.

### Letters to the Archbishop of Antivari, Carl Pooten

1. Hahn's letters to Pooten are preserved in the Albanian State Archives in Tirana (AQSH F132, D14) and were first published by Odette Marquet in 2012.
2. Reference is to the Austro-Hungarian embassy in Constantinople, which also represented the interests of the Albanian and Balkan Christians of the Ottoman Empire, as part of the *Kultusprotektorat*.

3. Paolo Dodmassei (Italian form of the name) of Shkodra was Bishop of Lezha in 1858–68.
4. *Histoire et description de la haute Albanie ou Guégarie* [*History and Description of High Albania or Ghegeria*], Paris 1858, by French explorer, diplomat and writer Louis Hyacinthe Hecquard (1814–66) who was made consul in Shkodra in 1854.
5. Angelo Bianchi (Alb. Bardhi).
6. Byzantine historian George Acropolites (1217–82) chronicled the years 1203–61 in his work.

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